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A MARINE, SIR!"



EDWARD CHAMPE CARTER

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“A MARINE, SIR !”

"A MARINE, SIR!"

By

EDWARD CHAMPE CARTER

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Author of "The Lone Scout," "Eight Bells," etc.

*With a Foreword by John A. Lejeune, Major General
Commandant, U. S. Marine Corps*



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DEDICATED TO

*Major General John A. Lejeune, U.S.M.C.,
a Bayard to his "Boys," and a Du Guesclin to
the world at large, as a very inadequate mode of
thanks for all he has done, and stood for, to the
"Boy" of another fellow.*

EDWARD CHAMPE CARTER,

*Patapsco Manor,
Ellicott City, Maryland.*

Sept. 15, 1921.

J. Nov. 30/21.

FOREWORD

Among the most potent of the myriad of forces whose action and reaction moulds the minds of the citizens of a country, or the members of a race, is that exerted by those who compose its popular romances, whether they be Greek epics, Norse sagas, Elizabethan plays, or modern novels. Who can say how much of the sagacity and daring of the Greeks of the days of Pericles was founded on the deathless verse of Homer, or can measure the effect of the soul-stirring tales of the Elder Edda in forming the rude nobility of mind and the utter fearlessness of the vikings? Among modern nations we have an example still more in point in the wonderful patriotic literature of the British Empire, whose popular writers in every national emergency have united to rouse and gird their race for the course appointed by its destiny.

To all of those who write, exalting the virtues of patriotism and devotion to duty, the nation owes a debt of gratitude, but there are none who deserve more highly of the state than those writers of books for boys who have wrought faithfully and with unflagging enthusiasm in

FOREWORD

upbuilding in the minds of its future citizens the virtues of honor, chivalry and courage, and a realization of the sacredness of their country and their country's flag.

In his books for boys Mr. Carter has voiced the ideals of war-time service in a manner worthy of the high traditions of his family and of the splendid record for self-sacrifice and devotion in behalf of the lives and health of others of his father, Doctor Henry R. Carter the distinguished Assistant Surgeon General of the Public Health Service. In his present volume he emphasizes an equally important, but often neglected ideal; service to the nation in time of peace. For his endeavor to awaken in the minds of the boys of today who are to be the citizens of tomorrow the realization of the fact that the nation is constantly in need of the service of its sons, in peace as well as in war, Mr. Carter deserves the warmest approbation and thanks.

JOHN A. LEJEUNE,
*Major General Commandant, U. S. Marine
Corps, Washington, D. C.*

CONTENTS

	PAGE
"I'M A MARINE, SIR!"	3
THE HARD BOILED EGG	16
THE CHINESE MUSETTE	31
"SWEET ADELINE"	47
"WAFFLES"	61
THE FEUD	67
SHADOWS	76
"TO WILL TO GO"	90
CIGARETTES	99
PLAY BALL!	109
OUR CHIEF	118
THE JACKAL'S LAIR	126
"SEMPER FIDELIS"	137
OUR HERO	150
THE BATTLE	159
"REJOICE! WE CONQUER!"	166

“A MARINE, SIR !”

*"Here's health to you and to our Corps,
Which we are proud to serve;
In many a strife we've fought for life
And never lost our nerve—
If the Army and the Navy
Ever look on heaven's scenes
They will find the streets are guarded by
The UNITED STATES MARINES."
(—From "The Marines' Hymn.")*

“A Marine, Sir!”

CHAPTER I

“I’M A MARINE, SIR!”

*“For there isn’t a job on the top o’ the earth, the
beggar don’t know, nor do;
You can leave ’im at night on a bald man’s ’ead,
to paddle ’is own canoe;
’E’s a sort of a bloomin’ cosmopolouse—soldier
an’ sailor, too.”*

(—Rudyard Kipling.)

The long line of dusty, chocolate-colored Pullmans that made up the New York-Tampa Limited, had thundered out of Charleston and was now gathering speed as, with the city, and the yards, behind it, it rushed across the South Carolina flats, cheerfully redolent of scrub pine, with touches of sassafras and palmetto, and with great, mournful live-oaks along the waterways, with venerable gray-green beards of Spanish moss, its nose toward Port Royal, Savannah, and the far south.

The train had lost so much time between Washington and Charleston that instead of reaching

the last named city at eight-thirty, it had pulled out at eleven-forty-three, an hour that made the tired, hungry passengers, especially those who had boarded it at New York, almost pathetically thankful at the announcement that a dining-car had been added to the entourage wherein a mixed meal, something of breakfast, and something of luncheon, might be had.

It was a bright, very hot day in middle June, with the result that the sleepers were stuffy and, worse yet, crowded, for a motley collection of lads had been climbing on from the time the train had pulled out of New York; youngsters from Columbia, from Princeton, from the University of Pennsylvania, from the Johns Hopkins, from the University of Virginia, plus even yet more bubbly joyous representatives from St. Paul's, Lawrenceville, Morristown, Swathmore "Prep", Tome, the old Episcopal High School, and the equally old Citadel, and both college boys and boarding school urchins were filled, of course, with all the husky, frolicsome friendliness peculiar to the beginning of a three months' vacation, with the one, magic word *Home* dancing in their eyes, shining on their clear-skinned faces, and warm within their lusty, young hearts.

For the most part, the few grown-up passengers on this solid Pullman train gave up their

own peace and quiet with laughing tolerance, but not so two of the three men who occupied the smoking compartment of the sleeper "Arethusa," for they were almost trembling with indignation, while their gray hairs fairly bristled with the disagreeable vehemence of their joint emotions.

Both these gentlemen were in their early sixties, both were fat, one short, one tall, and one wore a closely cropped, gray mustache, while the other (the short one) wore a pointed, Vandyke beard, each separate hair of which seemed a quiver with agitation. The tall, old gentleman wore the olive drab field uniform of the United States Public Health Service, with its especial insignia, an anchor and chain crossed with a winged Mercury staff, on the collar, while his shoulder straps sported the silver laurel leaves of a Senior Surgeon (Lieutenant Colonel). The short man was in civilian clothes. Both were bound together by one common feeling just now, for both were very, very angry, and their anger appeared to afford considerable pleasure to the third man in the compartment, himself a fairly tall, grizzled Marine officer in field uniform, like the fat, old doctor, but with a large, clean-shaven face, very red under a great thatch of white hair. He was stout, where the other two were fat, and the amount of springiness he possessed, consider-

ing his weight, was uncanny, and the one thing he most strongly suggested was *force*. Across his left breast were strung the gay, little color blocks of various campaigns—the Philippines, Cuba, Haiti, Mexico, and France. He puffed very energetically at a big cigar—even his smoking was quick, and vehement, and thoroughly efficient—and sometimes he grinned, and sometimes he chuckled, and sometimes he roared with laughter, all of which seemed to have the worst possible effect on the other two old fellows. Finally the U. S. Public Health officer turned on him:

“Oh, you can laugh like a gaby if you want to, Johnny!” he growled, attempting to refill his pipe, but spilling most of the tobacco in his excitement, “but I tell you I think it’s an outrage. Seems to me the Seaboard Air Line should be forced, yes sir, *forced*, to run separate Pullmans for all these young hobbledehoyes from schools and colleges. Why, I’ll be a wreck, and ready for commitment in St. Elizabeth’s, by the time I leave this train for the Miami connection! But you can sit up there and ha-ha like the blithering, old idiot that you are, for you’ll be off this baby cage within an hour, all snug within the Post Commandant’s quarters at Camp Ross. *Yah!* How I do detest boys! They were different when I was young.”

"You bet they were!" from the grizzled Major General, with an amused chuckle. "*You* never made any noise when *you* started on *your* summer holidays, did you, Jacky Iron? Oh, no! Not you! Say! Remember that time we all held up the Columbia-Charleston train, the day the Citadel closed for the Christmas holidays, and made every girl on board take a box of candy from us, and every boy, under eighteen, sing? *Little Annie Rooney* was most awfully new then, and popular as the dickens, and *Climbing Up the Golden Stairs* was thought to be especially fetching, you know."

Dr. Iron chuckled fatly:

"Oh, those were good days, I grant you, Johnny!" he admitted, "but, well! we boys from the old Citadel never annoyed one of our elders and betters as this lot of young hoodlums does. Why, even poor, old Croaker here had to leave his section!"

"*Faugh!*" with a perfect transport of bitterness, from Mr. Justice Croaker, of the United States Supreme Court. "How could I help myself? Opposite me sits a nice enough looking boy of about seventeen, from Lawrenceville, but, *Ugh!* he's a pet lizard in a shoe box, and of course it gets out!"

The General looked thoughtfully at the fat,

indignant, little jurist, his large, grizzled head tilted back, not unlike a sprightly bird's, on his short neck.

"Say, Billy!" he said quietly, "are you willing to bet a five spot that that Lawrenceville boy didn't turn that lizard loose just to get rid of you? If you are, I'm on, old son! I need an extra five to buy some sort of an offering for that wonderfully jolly twelve-year-old of the Brigadier, at Camp Ross. I forgot it in Washington yesterday, and I wouldn't think of cheating myself out of the fun of the mischievous, yard wide grin that Bunny will reward me with for anything 'in heaven above, or the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth.' Hul-lo. They're announcing breakfast—or shall it be luncheon? You chaps want to join me, eh? Oh, come on, come on, Jacky!"

"Not if I know it, Johnny!" with angry firmness, from the doctor. "No, sir! Better an empty stomach than a sick one, say I! Fancy the sickening, disgusting ribaldry of those snickering, idiotic boys while they feed! Tossing rolls at each other all about the diner, I haven't a doubt. Herod has won my respect this day, by Gosh! I wouldn't trust my stomach in such an ordeal, though, thank goodness, it's a strong one as a rule! But to be at the same table with one

of those young hyenas! Why, I—*Oh, good Lord!*"

This last remark, cried out in open anguish, was caused by the fact that someone's head had violently butted the medical officer in the back; he had been standing with his back toward the swaying, green curtain that hung between the smoking compartment and the narrow passageway of the car. The next moment he was glaring down savagely at a laughing, deeply apologetic boy of eighteen, who, with the lurch of the train, had more or less sprawled into the little room.

He was just a bit short for his age, but splendidly solid, and tough bodied, if rather inclined to plumpness, as if pies, and cakes, and peanut taffy were still very dear to his heart. He had a round, tow-colored head, and a delightfully good-looking face, as brown as the sun could tan it, and out of this smooth brownness there looked a pair of big, very practical, gray eyes. The face, along with its undoubted good looks, was at once chubby and stormy, with a wide, funny grin on the mouth, like a particularly jolly sunbeam breaking through a thunder cloud. On the top of his tow head was set, very snugly, a campaign hat, and his short neck was confined tightly, as was his whole, husky body, in an olive green uniform tunic, while his legs were covered by uni-

form trousers of the same material, each sturdy calf protected by a closely fitting legging. In spite of being very much abashed, and honestly apologetic, in spite, too, of the shy, friendly grin on his wide mouth, there was something of most cheerful swagger about this handsome youngster, as if he found the world an uncommonly jolly place for a fellow to live in. Concisely, he was a combination of some most gloriously beautiful, young Norse God, and of a comically mature Cupid.

"Can't you have enough decency, young man, to see you are not wanted here, and so can't you g—" Dr. Iron began, in a perfect roar of indignation, but then his voice changed to a sort of rumbling coo, while a broad smile crossed his weather-beaten, old face.

"Why, bless my soul!" he chuckled, grabbing the uniformed boy by both square-set shoulders, and looking down at him with undoubted affection. "It's the *Wardy*-Scout! It's Wardy! It's young Warfield Brown, of the old Folly Quarters, by thunder! You young heathen, what are you doing here? Croaker, you've heard me speak of Wardy Brown a hundred times, at the Cosmos, haven't you? Oh, you know! He and Billy Hoover, Frank Hollis' young cousin, were the first Boy Scouts, back in war times, to help out

dear Gorgas' gospel of humanitarianism, and military efficiency, too, by helping our Service in the extra-cantonment sanitation, getting rid of malaria mosquitoes down here in Dolittle county, about three and a half years ago. This is Judge Croaker, Wardy. Croaker, you old stick, this is the nicest boy in the United States, bar none. Fact! General, I want you to shake hands with a boy who's a real gentleman, in spite of being a boy, though he's a perfectly rotten temper. That's his one fault—a crazy, absurd, unreasonable temper. Wardy, this is my old friend, General—*Hold on! Now what?*"

Young Warfield Brown had put his tough, brown paw with shy cordiality into the Judge's little, pudgy one, but now, as he turned to be introduced to the other man, his round face got very red, the cheerful grin left his lips, and his mouth seemed frozen, little drops of sweat began to tumble most uncomfortably down his straight nose, and his whole body felt strangely sticky, while his heels clicked together, and he became as rigid as a frozen butterball, and one hand rose in a snappy salute, though the hand itself trembled just a little.

"What's wrong, you young ass?" Dr. Iron bellowed, and then, even before the boy could answer, he himself realized the trouble, whereat he laughed mightily.

"I'm a Marine, sir!" Wardy stammered, blushing up to the closely cropped fluff of his tow colored hair.

The General had returned the boy's salute with cool firmness, though he smiled just a faint, grim, little smile, too. Then he turned to Dr. Iron:

"I fancy you'll want to talk to Brown about the good work all of you chaps did at Camp Ross," he said, pleasantly enough, "so I will go on and hold a table in the diner with the Judge. You'll not be long, will you, Jacky?"

"So long that you'd best not wait for me, Johnny," Dr. Iron laughed, again clapping the stout, little marine on the back. "You and Billy Croaker go ahead. I can't join you, but I'll see you before you get off at Camp Ross. You marines always were great on putting on side! When we Public Health chaps were cleaning this place for you at Camp Ross the trains came no nearer to it than Dolittle. Wardy, you and I are going to have lunch together."

"Gee, that's pretty great of you, Dr. Iron!" Wardy smiled, more shy than ever, and heartily wishing that either a certain young marine, or a certain world famous Major General was at the bottom of the deep, blue sea, "but—but you see, sir, I've got my buddy with me, Larry Annisby. He's a marine, too, and," grinning in spite of

himself, "he's—he's a *boy*, too, sir—so I don't reckon you could stand two cubs at once, could you?"

"I'd stand fifty cubs if they were friends of yours, Wardy!" Dr. Iron laughed. "Produce this 'buddy' of yours, as you call him. Hope he's one half as nice a little chap as Billy Hoover used to be, in the old sanitating days, down here in South Carolina. And we'll have a good, man's sized lunch, too. I'll see to that part. Fancy they starve you to death at Camp Ross, at the Marine Institute. Eh, General? How's the grub?"

"Why, I believe it is considered entirely adequate, Jacky," the General smiled coolly, "though probably not equal to the fare on a dining-car."

"Well, how about it, Wardy-Scout?" Dr. Iron persisted, with ponderous jocosity.

"Aw, the chow's all right, sir!" a bit stiffly, from the wretchedly blushing marine.

"Sure?"

"Yessir!" in one word.

"Blame it, Wardy! Where's your tongue? Can't you say more than that?"

Wardy's wide mouth set, and his smooth jaw squared; he was evidently beginning to justify the old officer's account of his shaky temper, for he was very plainly getting mad all over.

“No, suh!” he said, and then, in spite of himself, he lifted his miserable eyes helplessly, beseechingly, to the large, red face of his own, gray headed Major General, and, all honor to that great man, he gave the boy the ghost of a very humorous, and thoroughly understanding, smile, and then strode out toward the dining-car.

“Getting mad, aren’t you?” Dr. Iron chuckled, watching the quickly mounting color in the tow-head’s face with evident amusement. “Same old, hot-tempered, fly-off-the-trigger Wardy-Scout! Ready to eat me up this minute, eh? Well, isn’t the food at Quantico good, Wardy?”

“Yessir!” sullenly.

“Then why not talk about it?”

“Aw, heck, Dr. Iron! What you think I am? *He* was here, wasn’t he? And he’s the greatest, wonderfulest thing in pants! The bravest, the smartest, the biggest, and the—the strictest General in the Corps. Well, you don’t think I’m such a freshie as to talk, with a General of my own Corps spang beside me, do you, sir? Let alone a wonderful chap like him.”

“And why not? Why not? Why not, Wardy?” from the old medical officer, his small eyes twinkling with fun at the boy’s deeply blushing earnestness.

Wardy Brown gazed at him, partly in anger,

partly in blank consternation, and partly in actual pity. Finally he sighed, and offered a short, but to both of them, utterly satisfactory explanation:

"I'm a marine, sir!"

CHAPTER II

THE HARD BOILED EGG

*"This is the tale that was told to me,
By that scarred and shattered son o' the sea;
An' he ain't like some o' the swabs I've seen,
Wot would go an' lie to a poor marine."
(—Old Song.)*

"What an extravagant, young dog you are, Wardy," Dr. Iron began, as they left the smoking compartment to search the "Arethusa" for Larry Annisby, or "Larry Bluff" as Wardy usually called him, "traveling in a Pullman for a short distance like this, from Charleston to Camp Ross! I suppose you got on at Charleston, didn't you?"

The stout, little marine laughed:

"Yessir!" he grinned. "Sure I did! Me and my buddy were off on liberty, you see. And of course it was extravagant to take a sleeper, and I reckon it looks like all kinds of side for two buck privates like us to be paying extra Pullman fare, but we had a mighty good reason, sir; honest we did. We picked on this through Sea-

board train on purpose, just 'cause it's all solid Pullman. We were scared to death, you see, for fear we'd have to make the trip back to camp with the Hard Boiled Egg if we took the regular train over the C. R. & P., with day coaches."

"Scared of *whom*?" Dr. Iron demanded.

"Of the Hard Boiled Egg, sir. Sergeant Mike Bowker, you know. He's as tough as tough, honest he is, and he's all the time kiddin' us younger fellows, too, and that makes us pretty mad. That's why we call him 'the Hard Boiled Egg,' that and because, when a fellow least expects it, he melts into the toughest martinet in the Corps. He'd just about die before he'd pay a cent extra to ride on a Pullman, and that's why me and Larry Bluff picked this train. He's a regular bearcat, is Sergeant Mike! Hullo! Here's Larry!"

A slim, firm-set young fellow of just Warfield's own age, and equally sun-browned and generally "fit," waved one hand at the other marine, and then, taking in the silver laurel leaves of the U. S. Public Health officer, turned pink, looked quite demure, and, uncurling himself from his seat, and pulling his campaign hat straight on his sleek, brown head, came to attention.

Wardy introduced him to Dr. Iron, and the irascible, old fellow's genuine cordiality, added to the comforting fact that his bronze insignia proved him to be of an alien service, put things on a very friendly basis, and called forth an impudent, but perfectly cheerful, grin from Larry. He in no wise meant to be impudent at present, be it added, but Nature had given him a wide-awake face, at once gentle and saucy, with a turned-up nose, that was really not his fault—though he did usually live up to it, it must be owned. He was a saxophone player in the Fifth Regiment band, and of this he was, to quote Wardy, "powerful chesty."

The old officer led the way with some pomp along the swaying aisle of the "Arethusa," and he, and the two, trim, uniformed boys behind him, made quite a little stir among the school and college lads, upon whom Dr. Iron gazed with a cold eye, muttering very audibly that it was refreshing to have at least two youngsters still awake to the fact that their Country wanted clean, able bodied, young fellows at all times.

"Yessir!" Warfield answered, his round face very much in dead earnest. "Seems to me, somehow, that now the war's over, 'most all the fellows I know at home seem to think our Country can

take care of itself any old way. It's funny! During the war, though all us kids at home were too little to ship over, we'd all have given our ears to do it. And now, why Gee! Most of 'em seem to forget that their Uncle Sammy needs the right sort of fellows for the Services, just the same as ever, and, with our Corps, anyhow, they do such a heap for the fellows in it, too. Why, Doctor, every buck private among us, even kids like me and Larry Bluff, have a perfectly good chance of getting our commissions, and becoming officers, if we plug away hard, and play square, and live clean, while in the Army and Navy practically the whole bunch have to stay non-commissioned officers, 'less they've been through West Point or Annapolis. Our Post Commandant, the Brigadier General you know, says that us Marines are just like what Napoleon said about his private soldiers—'Every soldier of France carries a Marshal's baton in his knapsack!' Our Lieutenant, Chester Hume—the other officers call him 'Chet' for a sort of pet name, and so do us fellows behind his back, 'cause he's the nicest thing going 'most—is always lifting us along to work for our commissions, and you just bet your life I'm going to get mine one of these days, sir! *Honest!* But the way most of the fellows I know down home, here in South

Carolina, feel about the Services now-a-days, is all wrong. I can't make it out."

"Aw, most of 'em just don't stop to think, I guess!" Larry Bluff cut in. "Still, it's right much like Kipling's poem, isn't it, Colonel?"

'And it's Tommy this, and Tommy that, and Tommy go
away;
But it's "Thank you, Mister Atkins!" when the band begins
to play.'

"Hullo!" from Dr. Iron—they were now parading down the length of the "Wimikomouchee"—"Read Kipling, do you?"

Larry Bluff's pert face colored up guiltily:

"Yes sir!"

"Any other poetry?"

"Yes sir! Some."

"For instance?"

"W-well, I think some of Tennyson is mighty nice, an' Macaulay's pretty great, you know, and *Swinburne! Gee!*"

"Aw, that boy don't care what he says, Doctor!" Wardy grinned, quite pleased to see that Dr. Iron was evidently really interested in Larry's love for poetry, rather surprising in such a lusty, wide-awake type of out-of-doors youngster, for though very slight he was both tough and wirey. "He just don't care *what he says!*"

He'd read all day long if the regulations would let him—which they won't. Now I'll own up that poetry makes me awful sick, but I like some books, if they're jolly. There's 'Treasure Island,' now; I think that's an awful nice, old book, don't you, sir? And 'Penrod'—there's a real hum-dinger for you! But poetry! Aw, Gosh!"

"Say, hire a hall, Wardy!" Larry flung back—they were now seated in the dining-car "Pom Pom," and Dr. Iron was ordering a Homeric luncheon, whereof a huge porterhouse steak, with mushrooms, was the foundation—"You like some poetry. He knows one piece of sure 'nough poetry by heart, Colonel, and he can say it awful nice—just as *plain!*"

"'Saul among the prophets,' eh?" Dr. Iron chuckled. "Let's have it, Wardy-Scout! No rhyme, no lunch."

The stout, little marine grinned sheepishly:

"Honest?" he said, his mouth much too full of beefsteak and French fried potatoes for elegance, "Then I reckon I'll say it to you. It's the only piece I know; honest it is. I think it's a right nice piece, though. Well, here goes!" and, his face quite solemn, and keeping time by gently waving his fork like a baton, he declaimed in his rather deep, slow voice:

“ ‘We’ll know how to shovel, we’ll know how to dig,
We’ll know how to darn and to sew;
We’ll know how to work and to care for our rig;
We’ll know—oh, yes, matey, we’ll know!

“ ‘We’ll know how to sleep on a table or chair,
And how to keep warm in the snow;
We’ll know that there’s nothing to equal fresh air;
We’ll know, won’t we, matey? We’ll know!

“ ‘We’ll know what it’s like to eat cold-storage hen;
We’ll know how to value our dough.
Will we know what to do if they want us again?
You bet your last jitney, we’ll know!’ ”

Dr. Iron pounded the table enthusiastically:

“*Bully!*” he yelled. “Just the poem to issue from the mouth of a husky, young ‘Devil Dog’ like you, Wardy-Scout! Where’d you find it?”

Warfield looked pleased:

“Oh, it was in an old copy of ‘The Outpost’ a fellow had when I first went in the Corps, down at Paris Island. ‘The Outpost’ was a little magazine published by the fellows at the Rifle Range at Annapolis, during the war. That poem was by a guy named Rick O’Shea. I thought it was so nice I remembered all about it, you see, sir. And me, and Larry Bluff, and all us fellows at Camp Ross, ‘we’ll know what to do if they want us again,’ you bet! Why, look here, Doctor!” lean-

ing far over the little table in his warm eagerness. "We two—me and my buddy—are trying like time to get down to Haiti. It's more fun fightin' niggers than nobody, isn't it, sir? Say! I b'lieve we'll get there, too!"

"Sure we will!" with equal enthusiasm, from the impudent faced marine—the two boys sat side by side, the old officer opposite—" 'Sure we will, sir!' I—I heard Captain Fisher telling Chet—aw, gosh! I mean Lieutenant Hume, sir—that there'd be a change in the personnel down there, and that some of the Camp Ross bunch was sure to go. 'Course Wardy and I are just in the school, but—but don't you think if we begged hard enough we could get to go? Couldn't *you* help us, Colonel? Oh, I know it's awful cheek to ask you, but we'll pretty near die if we don't get a chance, sir."

"Shure, an' I think I may as will be tellin' yez I've a large idea that ye will, thin, the pair av yez; an' that soon, glory be!"

"Aw, my Golly!" from Wardy, with a gasp of dismay. "It's Sergeant Bowker!"

"Shure, an' it's meself, me b'y!" resumed the deep voice that had spoken a few seconds before, and, turning 'round, the stout, little marine beheld the fat, red face of that much dreaded foe to boyish dignity, Sergeant Michael O'Donnivan

Bowker, U. S. M. C., his closely cropped, gray mustache bristling as usual, a triumphant grin on his mouth.

"I was fur takin' th' twilve-twinty ovehr th' C. R. an' Pay," the Hard Boiled Egg continued easily, first saluting Dr. Iron, who, with a slight lift of an eyebrow invited further conversation, "but thin phwat do I see but two little marine bhoys a'standin' at the Pullman windy, an' thinks I to meself, 'Phwat ho, Mike! Are ye, a Sergeant av th' Corps, goin' ter thravel in a day couch, whin two little bhoys av buck privates is goin' in th' slaypey? Take shame to yerself, Mike Bowker!' sez I. 'Ef thim childer be a'spindin' Uncle Sam's wages that fray an' azy, can't ye be playin' th' gintleman, too, ye auld lummox?' So here I be, me dears, an' fairly rejoiced to be wid yez both, an' to see ye in company wid yer bethers—m'anin' yerself, Colonel. A phroud day ut should be in these childers' lives to be allowed to show their downy faces—though God knows there ain't even down on their skins yit!—across th' bhoard from a commissioned ofricer, *an'* a gintleman."

"Well, but Sergeant, are us two goin' to Haiti real soon?" from Wardy, his round face smiling eagerly, and deeply pink under its tan. "Are you dead sure, Sergeant? Honest?"

"Shure as a kildee, an' they're said to be a very shure birrud, Whardy!" the Hard Boiled Egg answered genially. "So stan' by, ye an' yer buddy, ter pack up yer little kits, kiss yer girruls fair-ye-well at th' daypot, an' off wid yes ter kill naigers fer th' honor av yer awn hides, w'ich es little enough; fer th' honor av th' auld Riggimint, w'ich es a sight mhore, an' fer th' honor av th' Corps, an' Ginerall Layjeune, w'ich es the divil av a lot, remimber. *I* shall stay at home, the saints be praised!"

"Aw, don't you want to go an' help lick them niggers, Sergeant Mike?" Wardy cried with vast enthusiasm. "I thought you'd be the first one in on a job like this. The Sergeant's been a regular bearcat in his day, sir," to Dr. Iron. "He was in the Philippines, helping to chase Aguinaldo; he was fightin' Boxers in Pekin; he was in the landing party at Vera Cruz; and he was at Chateau-Thierry. Honest, he was, sir! I reckon you're just kiddin' me again, ain't you, Sergeant? You sure do love to kid a boy! It's just—just *pie* to you, ain't it? You can't fool me this time, though, 'cause I know you want to go back to Haiti again, and help fight niggers all right."

"*That* I do not, thin!" most emphatically, from the Hard Boiled Egg.

"Honest?" in wide eyed astonishment, from Wardy, and:

"Aw, sa-ay!" in equal amazement, from Larry Bluff. "Why not, sir?"

"Bekaze av thim Cocos, me son!" Sergeant Bowker answered gloomily. "I kin do me part as will as th' nixt wan wid a Moro, or a Chink (though a divilish screechy haythin is a Chink, at that!), or wid a two hunder pound Fritzle at tither ind av me baynit, *but* preserve me from a Coco! I must tell ye two bhoys right now, that ut mos' broke me heart (an' a cauld, tough bit av auld stewed beef liver ut is in ut's natural state!), whin I saw yer young names putt down on gineral ohrders for Haiti! W'y, don't ye childer know thin, that them Cocos ate bhoys? Nice, fresh skinned bhoys like th' pair av yez 'specially, for ye've naither av yez shaved in yer lives yit, an' that makes ye tinder from th' scalp down."

"Aw, Heck!" Wardy grinned, squaring his shoulders with cheerful swagger. "Who's scared of an old Coco? I ain't! Neither's this buddy of mine, I bet! Anyhow, that's all crazy-house talk, Sergeant, 'bout 'em eating boys—marines, I mean."

The Hard Boiled Egg very ponderously searched a small bag at his side, finally rooted out a copy of an evening paper of some

antiquity, unfolded it, and then, gazing sorrowfully upon the two, eager faced youngsters, spoke:

"Shure, an' ye do be emazin' me, Whardy!" he began at last, addressing the stout, little marine more especially, "hearin' ye go on so ignorunt-like, about thim Cocos in Haiti. Phwat's more, I'm not at all shure ef ut's not jist openly insurbordinate ye be, over an' above th' rist av ut."

"Aw, wha' for?" Wardy grunted, feeling vaguely uneasy now.

"Ah, thin ye may will ask, Whardy!" the Sergeant replied mournfully, "for ut's now turrible plain ter me that ye've not been readin' th' papers, me son, or ye'd be fer knowin' more av thim Cocos, ye an' yer little buddy, poor lambs! Will, since ye've insisted on goin' ter Haiti, an' since gineral ohrders sez go ye shall, I hate ter unfauld th' horrid thruth to yez, but I've niver shirked me dooty before, an' I'll not begin this late in life. Will yez jus' be listenin' to this here?" and he read the headlines from his old evening paper, the boys, who had left their own table, leaning over his fat shoulders, not unlike two of Peter Paul Rubens' seraphim in their earnest innocence, and following the print with their own young eyes:

"A MARINE, SIR!"

**"SAYS HAITIAN CACOS
WOULD EAT MARINES**

**"A GENERAL OF THE U. S. MARINE CORPS
WRITES TO LADY INTERESTED IN
MARINE LEAGUE OF VODOO
RITES AND BELIEFS**

"(Special Dispatch to the Evening——)

"Chicago, April—Cannibals in Haiti and Santo Domingo, better known as Cacos, or Hill Tribes, believe that if they eat the vital organs of a brave white man they will inherit his qualities of courage. This constant menace is hanging over American Marines stationed in those places, according to a letter written by a General of the Corps to an influential lady in the United States Marine League. . . . They make the white man their prey, not through a desire for food, but in celebrating their voodoo rites. . . .

"The General, in his letter, refers to recent newspaper reports that marines in Haiti had been killed, and stripped, and eaten by cannibals. He says there is considerable foundation for these stories and cites three cases. In two of these nothing of the young marines was ever found except their bones and clothing. In the third case . . . killed in action, and his body was recovered by American forces a few hours later, but in the meantime he had been stripped, and his head and vital organs removed.'"

Even above the rumbling of the train, Dr. Iron and the old Sergeant could very plainly hear the heavy, scurrying breathing of the stout, tow-headed, little marine, dismay writ large upon his round face. As for Larry Bluff, that expert member of the Fifth Regiment Band appeared to have stopped breathing altogether.

Strangest of all, however, was a peculiar, snorting, chuckling sound from a small table behind the Sergeant's, somewhat further down the car. It rather suggested a heavy, full-blooded man strangling on soup, and, looking up quickly, Dr. Iron recognized the broad, olive drab back of the Major General, his shoulders shaking with suppressed mirth.

"An' so I feels fer ye, Whardy!" the Hard Boiled Egg ended, with positively a paternal sadness, "an' fer ye, too, Larry, me b'y, fer ef I was a Coco, I'd pick th' pair av yez over an' above any marines in th' whole Corps, fer tinder ye'll be shure ter prove, tough though yer young bodies may feel from th' outside av yer white skins—but thin no Coco cook av eny rale intelligence will be fooled by that."

"Well," from Wardy, his good-looking face very white under its thick coat of tan, "tell you what *I* think, Sergeant! I think it's just awful. And if the General says it's so, why, it's *so*, and

I'd punch any feller's head who said it wasn't. It—aw, Heck!—it makes me feel all hot, and sick inside to—to know that—that maybe some of them Cocos will catch me, and—and eat me up, but," his tough, young body suddenly straightening, and his shoulders squaring pugnaciously, "I'm goin' just the same. That's what us marines are for, and— and if the General says I can go, why, doggone it! I'll go, even if I *am* eaten up after I get down there. Honest!"

Whereupon, from further down the dining-car, someone banged a delighted fist, quite ecstatically, on a small table, while, though in a chucklingly rapturous whisper, was growled out this triumphant remark:

"Blame it, Billy Croaker, you can't stop 'em! No, sir! They'll go through fire itself, and they'll go whether they're scared or not, and—and *God knows* I'm proud of 'em!"

CHAPTER III

THE CHINESE MUSETTE

*"I've never sailed the Amazon,
I've never reached Brazil;
But the 'Don' and the 'Magdalena,'
They can go there when they will!
Yes, weekly from Southampton,
Great steamers white and gold,
Go rolling down to Rio,
(Roll down, roll down to Rio!)
And I'd like to roll to Rio
Some day before I'm old!"*
(—Rudyard Kipling.)

"Yay, Bunny!"

"Yay, Tom!"

It was the morning after the awe-inspiring account of the Haitian Cacos, as drawn by that master hand of Marine camp narrative, Sergeant Michael O'Donnivan Bowker, on board the Seaboard Air Line's dining-car *Pom Pom*, and Master Thomas Worthington Beck, son of a Colonel of the Corps, having cantered over to the administration building at Camp Ross for the purpose of entering upon the delicate finan-

cial question of floating a loan of twenty-five cents from his parent, and being entirely thwarted therein by finding the Colonel in the office of the Brigadier General Commandant, participating in a dreary discussion with the Brigadier, his Adjutant (Lieutenant Colonel McArthur), and the General, arrived the day before from Washington, betook his thirteen years of rather plump boyhood up the hill to the Brigadier's quarters, there to look as minutely as possible into the financial standing of his most particular chum, the Brigadier's son and heir, age twelve years, one month.

The day was slightly drizzly, and much colder than the preceding June morning, and this accounted for two things: Firstly, that the Brigadier's son sat hunched up on the lowest step of his father's quarters, under the protection of the small, white stucco portico, his rather pointed chin resting on his sun-browned, well worn, little knees, quite bare between the tops of his carefully rolled down stockings and the bottoms of his favorite pair of knickers, distinguished by a vaguely gray color, and a small, roughly torn slit in the seat; a funny, old, gray cap on the top, and back, of his dusty-brown head; and, secondly, for the sake of their comforting warmth, two sleeveless sweaters over his

soft sport-shirt, with its wistfully stringy, gray knit necktie, the under sweater being of regulation brown, the upper one of gray.

He was a mischievous eyed, nimble limbed youngster, this Brigadier's son, with a slightly freckled face under the aforementioned thatch of straight, dusty-brown hair, with a pair of rather mournful, young eyes, and with a grin that would have flung open the heart-gates of a Penrod Schofield, or a Huck Finn after just once glancing at his soft lips. That grin suggested mischief, and most alarmingly inventive, purposeful mischief, at that. For the rest, both as to legs and body, he was simply a very firm skinned, very solid, and undoubtedly quite lean boy, and he was the idol of every mess at Camp Ross, from the sedate correctness of the Hotel Ross, through the genial graciousness of the Hostess House, down to the catch-as-catch-can methods of the "A No. 1 Lunch Room," being both hugely enjoyed, and also respected, for he owned complete, unwavering, unquestioning obedience to all the authority he knew so far, the wise authority of the Brigadier, and this, considering Bunny's real genius for the impish, showed a mighty fine side of him.

In both tough paws he held, very lovingly, a weirdly fashioned thing of wood and brass,

known in the catalogue from which he had recently selected it, and where its picture had at once won his twelve-year-old devotion, as a "Chinese Musette—price \$3.00 *net*." His lean, stumpy, young fingers caressed its scale holes affectionately, and his lips were pressed against its mouth-piece with the kiss of some youthful anchorite to a sacred shrine relic, while his warm breath, coming sturdily, if pantingly, through the Musette's internal arrangements, sent forth a wavering, peevish sort of squeal-sound, full of ineffectual, protesting pain, like unto the cry of a particularly weak, undernourished, and very young baby.

So entrancing was this tone poem upon the soul of the Brigadier's son, that he barely lifted his eyes long enough to return Tom's greeting from the seat of his English saddle, but since they were chums, he felt in duty bound to remove his mouth from the Musette long enough to return a "Yay, Tom!" to the thirteen-year-old's "Yay, Bunny!"

As soon as the hooves of Tom's horse had been heard on the wet roadway, Bunny's Airedale, by name Mike, and with all the characteristic, unshaven look so peculiar to his kind, appeared lumberingly from the corner of the wide tea-porch, overlooking Bear creek and the Big Bear

river, and while the older boy sat wriggling uncomfortably, partly from the general dampness, and partly from the pressing need of financial aid, which, with his chum in this deeply abstracted mood seemed far from fulfillment, Bunny, a look of wistful hopefulness suddenly overspreading his face, got up, stretched his hard, little limbs for a second, and then, sticking his head very much on one side, and turning his somewhat freckled face heavenward, an expression of rapturous gravity on it, let out, with very considerable volume, an echoing "Ye-o-ow! Y'ow! Y'ow!" whereat the Airedale, sitting on his haunches, tilted *his* muzzle toward the dripping skies, and howled most dismally. At this the Brigadier's twelve-year-old seemed enormously entertained, in a gentle sort of way, and would very probably have continued the performance indefinitely had not Tom's pecuniary distress been so acute as to make him almost, though not quite, insensible to the entrancing racket. Therefore, though with some reluctance, he interrupted, whereat a very fat Major in nearby quarters pronounced him an uncommonly fine boy—for the Major was trying to take a nap.

"Say, Bunny!" the Colonel's boy began, in an aggressively offhand way, "Got fi' cents?"

The Brigadier's boy met his chum's eyes squarely, a look of pitying scorn on his face.

"Gee, Tom!" he replied, with indignant energy. "This is Friday, ain't it?"

"Yep!" from Tom, feeling an all enveloping gloom descending upon his spirits.

"Sure it is!" Bunny continued, the shadow of a grin on his funny mouth. "Sure it is! Well, how long you s'pose twenty-fi' cents going to last a fellow? Huh, doesn't Daddy always gimme a big, old, nice, old, round, old quarter every Saturday morning? 'Course he does! Well, I'll get it to-morrow, but you bet I'll not get it before, and I've got just exactly three cents now. That's honest, Tom. What you want all that money for, anyway?"

"Aw, *heck*, Bunny!" in righteous indignation, from the thirteen-year-old. "You aren't calling fi' cents 'all that money,' are you?"

"You jest *bet* I am!" very earnestly, from the Brigadier's son. "Why, my goodness! it's the hike of a lot of money—for me—on a Friday. But look here!" holding out the three cents on one pink and gray palm, "You're awful welcome to this, Tom. It's all I got."

"That's pretty great of you, Bunny!" Tom cried gratefully, "but it wouldn't help one bit, 'cause I'm all set for ice cream—that's the matter with me. I'm just silly for some ice cream, right now. And there'd be no fun in my eating it 'less

you were along, too, and even at the Hostess House, where all the eats are so jolly and cheap, eight cents won't feed us two kids. Hullo! there's your Dad and the General coming out of your quarters! They must have got in at the side, in the last minute or two, 'cause I left 'em at the Administration Building when I rode up here."

"Good-morning, boys!" the General smiled broadly, saluting the pair with much gravity. "I've just been asking the Brigadier where you were; I knew if I could find one of you, I'd be sure to find the other one, also. Wanted to tell you that I just heard, on good authority, that someone has paid in advance for two plates of ice cream apiece, down at the Hostess House, for the first couple of boys between eleven and fourteen, well nourished, who appear to claim them after eleven o'clock. Here! Hold on!" as Bunny attempted to swing himself up behind Tom. "It's only ten-fifteen now!" and, both Generals chuckling, they splashed down to the driveway, to meet a machine that swerved up close to them, and then stopped, with an odd gasp.

Out of this machine jumped a most engaging young fellow in his very early twenties, yellow headed and most splendidly proportioned for his five feet, nine inches, on his shoulder straps the single, silver bars of a First Lieutenant.

"Right on the minute, Chet!" the General laughed, as he and the Brigadier climbed into the car. Then, after vigorously stamping on certain things, and valiantly yanking at others: "Look here! Won't she go, Chet? Seemed to stop gladly enough!"

First Lieutenant Chester Hume grinned, though he blushed a little, too:

"Why, yes, sir!" he said apologetically, "she goes just great *lots* of times. Just you open up everything in her, General, and the boys and I'll shove, and I bet you fairly skoot down hill, sir. I—I *did* get her sort of cheap, but she's fine, once you get her going."

The two senior officers joined in heartily with the youngster's shy, contagious laugh, and the General "opened up everything in her," while the two boys, Tom having dismounted to help, and Chet put their shoulders to one of the rear mud guards and shoved, whereat, after a snort or two, the little car sprang forward quite gayly, Chet gazing after it with a red face, and humming quite tragically in the sweetest, and yet most robust, of tenors, and assuming the Garden's most powerfully resigned manner:

" 'Donnez-moi la clef,
La clef de mon prison! ' "

"Say, Lieutenant Chet!" Bunny dimpled into his most engaging grin, using the especial pet name they had for this lusty, young fellow, "That song isn't in it with 'Rolling Down to Rio'! Guess I'm sort of like the boy in that song! I sure do wish I'd seen the Amazon, and Brazil, and the Magdalena, and all that—like Daddy has. 'Course I was in Panama, but I was too little to remember much about it at Bas Obispo, and I've been at Porte au Prince, and I've stopped off at Guantanamo, and—"

"Aw, Gee!" Tom cut in glibly, "I've *lived* at Guantanamo. It's swell, too! 'Course I liked Mare Island better, but—"

"Now look here, Tom!" very reproachfully, from his chum, "if you're going to start talking all about Mare Island again, I'm going right spang inside and get the 'American Boy,' and read myself a nice story."

Tom laughed:

"I'll be good, Bunny!" he grinned. "He sure does hate for me to talk about stations he's never been at, Lieutenant Chet! It's awful funny."

"Well!" young Chet smiled, "I don't altogether blame him. Far as that goes, I can tell you things the pair of you've never seen," and, tilting his yellow head on one side, very much as Bunny had done for the edification of Mike,

he began to sing cheerfully, his legs held very far apart, and shaking one finger at the two grinning youngsters:

" 'I've never seen a jaguar,
Nor yet an Armadill—
O, dillowing in his armor,
And I s'pose I never will.' "

Then, the two boys' trebles joining in with a jolly, laughing addition of rollicking volume:

" 'Unless I go to Rio,
These wonders to behold,—
Go rolling down to Rio,
Roll really down to Rio,
Oh, I'd love to roll to Rio,
Some day before I'm old! ' "

Almost immediately behind them, back of a curve in the road, a horse neighed, and Tom's mount answered, while, at the very same second, a most delighted giggle was heard, a giggle cut short by an evident effort, and, a moment later, a new horse trotted up, astride its damp sides the sturdy, plump legs of Private Warfield Brown.

The stout, little marine at once swung himself to the ground, saluted his Lieutenant, smiled at the two boys in the most friendly fashion, and

then, his good-looking, young face quite pink under its brown skin, apologized:

"All that about a—a 'Armadillo dillowin' in his armor' sounds so awful funny to me!" he explained in straightforward, if somewhat shy, honesty. "It just always tickles me silly, every time I hear about it. But I wasn't giggling at you, Lieutenant Hume, sir. Honest, I wasn't!"

"It's a crazy enough song for the whole barracks to giggle at, Brown," Chet laughed. "Somehow or other we three like it, though—don't we, fellows?"

"I'll say we do!" from Tom, and:

"*You* tell it!" with equal heartiness, from the Brigadier's boy.

"I say! Got a match, Brown?" Chet continued, producing a cigarette.

"Yes *sir!*" from Wardy, producing a small, pasteboard folder from one pocket. "Say! Don't you think these are right nice, old match holders the Chaplain has, sir? See? One side's got the Corps device on it, with the *Semper Fidelis*, and all, and on the other side it says: 'Here's a light. But there's no match for the U. S. Marines!' See, sir? I think that's an awful nice, old match box my own self. It's so, too!"

"You bet it is!" with equally boyish fervor from the yellow headed Lieutenant. "It's the

greatest Corps, in the greatest Service, in the greatest Country, in the greatest Continent, in the world!"

"Sure it is!" very solemnly, from Wardy, while, as in an echo of their former duet:

"I'll say it is!" from Tom, and:

"*You* tell it!" from the Brigadier's boy.

They were all just a little grave for a few seconds, and then the Private spoke:

"The Colonel sent me up here for your mount, Tom," he said, with a slightly mischievous grin on his mouth. "He said he thought walking was heaps more—more—be-ne-ficial for you than ridin'. And I'm to lead your mare back to the stables. No, I won't, neither! What's the matter with me? Don't you want to ride that mare down, sir?" to Chet. "It'll be heaps nicer than walking, won't it, sir?"

"It would," Chet agreed, "if I was going down, but I've promised to—to help Major Pokey's wife to s-set out some rose bushes, or cuttings, or something, in this spare half hour I have right now. She 'phoned me just before I started up here for the General. I—I sort of wish they—they wouldn't all the time ask *me* to—to help 'em plant their old hedges, and trees, and roses, and cabbages! But they will. Why, I planted a lot of onions—three rows of 'em—for Mrs.

Carmine, and it took 'most all of last Sunday afternoon; and there was one peach of a ball game over by the hospital, too! And indeed, somehow I don't think it was the right time to plant onions, at that."

The stout, little marine indulged in another giggle here, which he managed to almost at once turn into a sneeze.

"Look here, Brown!" Chet laughed. "You won't have to lead that mare of Tom's after all. Here comes Annisby—your Larry Bluff as I believe you call him—moving down hill, by Gosh! He'll ride that mount in a jiff, I bet. Hullo! What's up? Here comes Corliss, one of the newer M. P.'s. Good-morning, Annisby! Not in trouble, are you, having an M. P. on your trail?"

Both the impudent-faced Larry Bluff, and the widely smiling member of the Marine Police, saluted, and then stopped—nobody at Camp Ross minds rain.

"Why, no sir!" the young "M. P." answered, speaking for Larry. "Larry Bluff's helping me sort of keep an eye on the Brigadier's quarters for a while."

"Wha' for?" with a squeal of the most delighted excitement, from Bunny, his dusty-brown head quite suddenly all a'bristle, his inquisitive face even more alert than usual.

"Why, you see, sir," the youthful "M. P." explained, gazing, not at Bunny, nor at Chet, but at the new, blue arm band about his biceps, with the M. P. in gray letters, "that Tough Kildare's been seen at the depot, at Dolittle, to-day."

"*Honest?*" from Wardy, and Bunny, and Tom, all in one breath, and:

"That so?" from Chet, rather a troubled scowl on his young face.

"Oh, yes, sir!" very eagerly, from the "M. P."—glad to have such an interested audience for once—M. P.'s are not the most popular souls about a barracks—"And you know, they *do* say, that after the Court gave Tough Kildare a dishonorable discharge from the Corps, he blamed it all on the Brigadier, and said a whole lot of pretty ugly things 'bout gettin' even, if he died for it. I guess that's why Colonel McArthur spoke to the General about us 'M. P.'s' being 'round these quarters pretty close, long as Tough Kildare's at Dolittle. He's wearin' 'cits' now, of course, but he's just the same giant of a man as always. It's sort of hard to know just how to handle a mean guy like him, now ain't it, sir?"

"Like fun it is!" with great conviction spake out the stout, little marine, the fluff on his closely cropped, tow head quite bristling with pugnacity. "Jam him in the nose, an' smash him in the jaw,

soon as you see him! Ain't I just right, Lieutenant Hume, sir?"

Chet was plainly worried, but he could not help laughing, especially as he knew that Wardy would undoubtedly do just what he said, even if the huge Kildare, who was twice his size, pounded him to death afterwards.

"I very much agree with you, Brown," he assented. "Still, of course all of us know Kildare by sight, so he'll never get a chance to pass the 'M. P.' at camp bounds, let alone get up here. Of course, at that, I don't suppose he would be such a fool as to try to break up anything at the post, even if he did come this way. That was probably all nothing but talk. Besides, the Brigadier only did what had to be done about Tough. That man was on liberty for ten days, and remained away for nearly three months without permission, and he did it twice, too. Of course he got a dishonorable discharge. Kildare has absolutely no right for a grievance—certainly none against the Brigadier—not a man of us has ever had a right to that."

"Well!" from a pleasantly excited Bunny, "he can't eat me, so who's scared? I'm not! And look here! There's four perfectly good plates of ice cream down at the Hostess House, all waiting for two fellows between eleven and fourteen,

well nourished, to eat. The General said so. Let's go, Tom! Say, Wardy! Lemme get up behind you please? That's just swell! And now Tom can ride his own mount back to stable, and then—Golly-day-man! Aw, *fellers!* It's eats for us two at the Hostess House—and it's Friday, too! Gee *whiz!* Say! *Whacha know about that?*”

CHAPTER IV

"SWEET ADELINE"

*"Marching along,
Fifty score strong,
Great hearted gentlemen
Singing this song."*

(—Robert Browning.)

"Wanna fight? Join the United States Marines!"

Thus, partly in quotation, spake Private Warfield Brown, U.S.M.C., if not exactly gayly, at least with a portentous sort of joviality that, while entirely friendly toward the group of young fellows he was addressing, seemed to bode ill for some unspecified member of the human species.

It was some hours since the two boys "between eleven and fourteen, well nourished," had cooled their delighted, young stomachs with two plates of ice cream apiece, but the place was the same, for the scene was the Hostess House, the room being the big lounging room just off the lobby, with its miraculous number of big, wicker chairs and sofas—all comfortable—its writing tables

supplied with ink stands, pens, and stationery, its open piano for any fellow to use who wanted, its Victrola, and its hundreds of other comforts which, emanating so entirely from the gracious presence of the Lady of the Hostess House herself, were just bound to suggest *Home* to even the most morose young fellow at Quantico.

The "boys," whole-heartedly echoing the Brigadier's own view, looked upon this rendezvous as their own, but only their own because the Lady chose to welcome them. She was a real hostess, a real friend, and she was welcoming these young fellows as a hostess within her own house, not as a manager. So no wonder they all loved the big, cool, charming place, and honored their hostess mightily, in their many different ways.

It was the loafing hour between evening "chow" and the regular, nightly band concert, "Sing-Song," and movies in the big gymnasium, and stretched out legs, lazily inert, young bodies, and cigarettes, were the order of the day.

"Who do you want to fight now, Wardy?" Larry Bluff smiled, looking up from his reading of "Atalanta in Calydon," his saxophone, in its green bag, resting close to his cushioned chair.

"Nobody in particular," Wardy grinned cheerfully, "that is—not 'less it should be Yank."

"*Hot dog!*" from young Corliss, just off his

M. P. duty, to which he would only have to return for a while for the first part of the movies, and deep just now in the selection of a good, noisy record: “Didn’t I say it was coming sooner or later, fellows?”

“Sure you did, Corliss!” from a very youthful Corporal, named Walter Falworth. “Sure you did! You M. P.’s always know what’s going to happen in barracks—’bout twenty-four hours after everybody else knows it.”

The M. P. looked hurt, but went on selecting his record just the same.

“Look here, Wardy!” asked a member of the 10th Regiment—Wardy was in the 5th along with many other fellows doing special study at the Marine Corps Institute, the 5th with its marvelous record abroad, “What’s the matter with you and ‘Yank’ Hanson? I’ll take my oath I heard your Lieutenant ‘Chet’ bragging to the General up at headquarters this morning that every man in *his* Company—the 49th—was a buddy with the rest. Thought it sounded sort of fishy at the time, I’ll admit!”

“Did he say that? Honest, Wally?” the stout, little marine demanded in some concern.

“Yep! Sure as I’m sitting here, or that Corliss, M. P., is disturbing the peace of this Hostess House right now by playing ‘Love Nest’ with a loud needle.”

"Well!" very stoutly, from Wardy, "Lieutenant Chet's right—almost! But look here, fellows! Yank Hanson ain't human! Nobody could be a buddy with that!"

"But you haven't said what's wrong yet, Wardy!" Falworth persisted, a twinkle in his eyes suggesting that the young scamp knew perfectly well already.

Larry Bluff, closing his copy of Swinburne over one brown finger, looked up again, and giggled:

"Why, don't you know really, Wally?" he laughed lazily, a dimple showing peculiarly white in the smooth brownness of his skin. "Yank always calls Wardy 'Waffles,' and it makes the old kid mad as time. Don't it, Wardy?"

"You bet it does!" in truculent sulkiness, from the stout, little marine, beginning to swing his campaign hat nervously by its cord, and scratching his tow head in an effort to keep cool. "*You* fellows wouldn't like to be called that, would you?"

"I wouldn't mind one bit, Wardy!" Larry Bluff answered gravely. "But then, well! you see I just love waffles—'specially when they're good and hot."

A delighted chuckle went 'round the entire group—for this tow-headed "Waffle" was un-

doubtedly fast reaching the state that Larry Bluff declared he “just loved”.

“You’re a nice guy for a buddy, you are, Larry Bluff!” poor Wardy began reproachfully, but further talk was cut short by the excited entrance of an indignant Sergeant, the Bandmaster of the 5th Regiment, a very natty, very trim, and very young “Non-Com.”

“What’s the matter with you, anyhow, Annisby?” he flared, his eyes picking out Larry Bluff at once. “You ought to be over in the gym. this minute. You’ve been late for the concert twice this week—and the General’s sure to look in this evening; he always does when he comes down from Washington, if he can, ’cause he’s crazy over the singing, you know. And of course the Brigadier will be on hand. ’Course I’ve seen the song leader—only the Chaplain beat me to it—and so of course we’ll sing—”

Every young head in the group—browns, and yellows, and reds, and the one cottony, tow-colored one, at once jerked over on one side, every mouth opened with a grin of the widest, and every bronzed throat let forth one wailing, musical phrase:

“ ‘Swe-e-e-et A-do-line!’ ”

The Band Sergeant laughed:

“Of course, you crazies!” he chuckled. “Didn’t

I just say the Brigadier was coming? And he'd be the most disappointed man at Camp Ross if we didn't all chirp 'Sweet Adeline' for him."

"Sure he would!" from Wardy, his good nature all returned, "and I bet the lot of us would sing that old thing spang through a shrapnel fire if it would please him. As for the General—just so it's singing of any sort, he's all hunkydory. Say! Did I tell you, me and Larry Bluff came down on the Seaboard with the General yesterday, and with the Hard Boiled Egg, too?"

"Some class, Wardy!" the Sergeant smiled—then, once more turning on the impudent faced Larry Bluff: "Aren't you *ever* going over to the gym., Annisby?"

"I always follow my Sergeant, sir!" Larry Bluff answered demurely, at the same time getting to his legs, however.

"Well, if you're late once more, I'll—" the Sergeant began stormily, but Wardy interrupted:

"Aw, Sergeant!" he said nervously, "Larry Bluff couldn't help being late this time, sir. He—he—he," scratching his tow head very earnestly in an attempt to invent some excuse—"Well, you see, sir—he—he—"

The young Bandmaster burst out laughing:

"Why, look here, Brown!" he expostulated

good-naturedly. “When I came in here you were just beginning to reproach Annisby for being all sorts of a poor buddy for teasing you, and now, here you are trying to take up for him.”

The stout, little marine blushed, but he laughed, too:

“Well, you see, Sergeant,” he explained, rather a helpless grin on his wide mouth, “it’s like this. He’s my buddy, and so if he cuts up rough, or gets fresh, I wallop him, but—but I can’t stand for another fellow doing it. Now, can I, sir?”

The youthful Bandmaster gave Wardy an approving, little punch in his remarkably tough stomach:

“No, of course you can’t, Brown,” he smiled. “‘Stick up for a pal’ is a by-word in the Marine Corps. Well, I’m late myself, now. Come ahead, Annisby!” a bit grimly. “‘Follow your Sergeant’—if you must.”

“Not one bit of a bad guy, the Sergeant!” Wardy remarked to Falworth as they, too, began to leave the Hostess House through a side door leading to the gymnasium across the road. “He’s handing us some peachy music out of the 5th Band, too, let me tell you. I’m just tickled silly that it’s our band’s turn to play to-night, ’stead of the 10th’s, or that bunch of Bolsheviks in the Post Band, ’cause the General is here. As to our

Brigadier, 'long as us fellows sing 'Sweet Adeline', he's quite satisfied. *You big cheese!*" in sudden truculence, "what *you* doing here?"

"I'm here on a pass, Wardy," answered a young man with an undeveloped sort of face, but standing six-feet-two in his socks, and heavy, and solid in proportion, "and I ain't doin' no harm, neither; an', furthermore, I'd smash that round, moon face of yours for you for callin' me names, only I'm a'bearin' nothin' but love for my feller men in my heart now-a-days—as I've just been a'tellin' the Colonel, here. I mean it, too."

Wardy, now made aware for the first time of the stout figure of the Post Chaplain in his Lieutenant Colonel's uniform, silver leaves on his shoulder straps, and big, gold crosses on his collar, behind the usual Corps device, came rigidly to attention, and saluted.

Wardy adored the Chaplain—an elderly officer as completely a priest as he was completely a man—and that meant that he was of the best that the Episcopal Church could give, for he was very much all man, was this Lieutenant Colonel, even though his weight was becoming a sensitive point with him, especially since his immediate Chief, the genial Brigadier, kept so comfortably slim.

"Aw, Chaplain, sir!" the stout, little marine

cried indignantly, “is Tough Kildare givin’ you a line of talk like that, sure ’nough?”—then he stopped, for the quiet, steady, not to say steely, look in the Chaplain’s eyes reassured him.

“Why, yes, Wardy!” he answered evenly—he was the only officer who ever spoke to Warfield Brown by his nickname—“Kildare has been talking to me. He says he wishes to apologize to the Brigadier for certain things he said after the findings of the Court last spring, and he told Chet—Lieutenant Hume, I mean—all about it, and so thoroughly does Hume believe in his sincerity that he had the Captain make him out a pass, up at headquarters. It really was unnecessary, though, Kildare, for I’ll give your apologies to the Brigadier myself, and I know he will accept them, and be glad to, too. Heaven knows he’s anything but a hard man, though”—his eyes beginning to twinkle—“he can be quite firm, I understand. Good-night, Kildare! Better hurry. That pass was only issued until seven-thirty, you see.”

“Why, is that so, sir?” very blankly, from the young giant—and then, an ugly look crossing his face: “How’d you know, sir?”

“Oh, I wrote it, Kildare!” the Chaplain answered steadily, “though of course the Captain signed it. Good-night! Ah, Corliss!” as

the youthfulest of the M. P.'s joined them, "glad to see you. Going to pitch for us Sunday afternoon? Bully! You know Kildare, don't you? Thought so! Oh, what perfectly *beastly* luck! Here comes the General, and the Brigadier!"

A queer smile crept over the undeveloped features of Tough Kildare, not one bit of which passed the Chaplain's eye unnoticed—nor Wardy's, either. One of the young giant's hands had slipped into his pants pocket, and Wardy, after only a second's hesitation, stepped directly between him and the two approaching officers, his broad, flat back, slightly a'quiver it must be owned, making a splendid target, and a good enough shield, too. In the meantime, however, Corliss had swung his revolver from its leather holster—he was now again on duty for part of the moving pictures—and, evidently interpreting a glance from the Chaplain correctly, appeared to be examining his gun, though in so doing its muzzle was exactly in a line with Kildare's left breast.

The two approaching officers saluted, and then stopped, the General shaking hands most heartily with the Chaplain.

"Thought you'd be inside, Chaplain!" he cried genially. "Got a good film for to-night? Bill Hart, eh? Bully! Oh, here's young Brown!

Haven't begun singing yet, have they, Brown? Good! By-the-way, Dr. Iron asked me if you were making good in the school. Are you?"

"Yessir! I—I think so!" Wardy answered, a little breathless. "It's my own fault if I don't, General."

"Wish everybody felt that way!" the General sighed—the Marine Corps Institute being very dear to his heart.

"Well, they all ought to, sir!" Wardy said warmly. "Oh, I know some of 'em kick the school—seem to think we ought to run a second Massachusetts Tech., or another Cornell! Reckon they and their folks don't stop to think that neither of those places feed their fellows all free, give 'em clothes, and money, and—and lots of good fun, too—and make men out of 'em into the bargain, like our Corps does. As to learning, sir—if a kid—a marine I mean—has stuff enough in him, he can learn all he needs in our school, and—and if he hasn't got the stuff, why he'll not do much better at a civilian school, seems to me."

The General was pleased, especially as, in his old friend, Dr. Iron's behalf, he had been talking to the Colonel of Wardy's Regiment that very evening, at dinner, and that officer had told him that this tow headed boy was of a type entirely

too straightforward, and honest, to give praise, even to the Secretary of the Navy himself, unless he meant every word of it.

"What work are you doing in it, Brown?" he asked.

"Mechanical Engineering, sir, and some of that Higher English stuff."

"That so? Well, why the English, Brown?"

Wardy's firm skin began to burn:

"'Cause I talk like a regular kid, sir," he blurted out, "and—and when I'm an officer, why, Gee! That sort of thing won't do!"

The three officers smiled.

"Quite right to lay all the planks for your commission the very best way you know how, Brown!" the General said, his voice suddenly rather gentle, despite his usual brusqueness. "I like nothing better than to hear talk like that from my men. Come, General!" to the Brigadier. "Let's get inside."

"Beg pardon, sir!" It was Tough Kildare speaking now for the first time. "Could I speak to you, please, Brigadier?"

At once the General, not the Brigadier, wheeled on him like a ponderous, but perfectly clear-headed, lion, his red face anything but pleasant:

"I'll speak to you, Kildare!" he rasped out.

"Don't wait for me, General—that's orders, not a request! I'll be with you in a second. Oh, I recognize you, Kildare—After the trouble you gave us in Washington, through your Congressman, I'll not forget you so quickly. If ever an enlisted man had a square deal, you had. I reviewed all those papers myself, most carefully. Camp Ross is not a healthy place for you. You were in jail for six weeks, in Toronto, since your discharge from the Corps. You see I know that. As to apologizing to the Brigadier, Hume has told me all about it. Well, your apology is accepted. And I will say, Kildare, I am heartily glad to know you are man enough to offer it—for whatever it may be worth!"

The head of the Brigadier—he was none too pleased over his dismissal inside, for he was not the type of man to relish being taken care of by anyone else,—suddenly appeared at one of the double doors of the gymnasium, his weather beaten face both earnest and ecstatic, Bunny peeping impishly from under one of his arms:

"Oh, General!" he called eagerly, "for heaven's sake hurry, man! You'll miss it *all*, if you don't! Oh, it's all right, perfectly all right, Kildare!" clearing the few steps at a jump, and walking straight up to the young giant, in spite of a growl from his grizzled superior, "I never was such a

fool as to pay any attention to all the threats you made about me, after those Court findings—it was natural enough for you to be sore at the time. I’m sorry it had to be the way it was. I’m always sorry in those cases, but *rules will be obeyed*, so long as I’m Post Commandant at Camp Ross. *Do* hurry up, General! I wouldn’t have you miss this to gain my two stars! I—”

And, from inside the big, frame building swept out a great, gusty volume of mellow, deep-throated sound from hundreds of young voices, under the vehement urgings of their fat, perspiring song-leader, Wardy, and the young M. P., and Kildare—from a long established habit—joining in from the outside:

“ ‘Sweet Adeline,
My Adeline—
At night, Dear heart,
For you I pine,—
In all my dreams—
Your fair face beams,
You’re the flower of my heart,
Sweet Adeline!’ ”

CHAPTER V

"WAFFLES"

*"To take your chance in the thick of a rush, with
firing all about,
Is nothing so bad when you've cover to 'and, an'
leave an' likin' to shout,
But to stand an' be still to the Birken'ead drill
is a damn' tough bullet to chew,
An' they done it, the Jollies—'Er Majesty's
Jollies—soldier an' sailor too.
Their work was done when it 'adn't begun; they
was younger nor me an' you;
Their choice it was plain between drownin' in
'eaps, an' bein' mopped by the screw,
So they stood an' was still to the Birken'ead
drill; soldier an' sailor, too!"*

(—Rudyard Kipling.)

*"Jaques: I thank you for your company; but,
good faith, I had as lief have been myself
alone.*

*Orlando: And so had I; but yet, for fashion's
sake, I thank you, too, for your society.*

*Jaques: God be with you; let's meet as little as
we can.*

*Orlando: I do desire we may be better
strangers."*

(—William Shakespeare.)

Inside the big, darkened gymnasium, the great mass of husky, boyishly happy humanity swung sonorously from one song to another, with a small Marine orchestra playing the accompaniments (for the band concert always preceded the singing), and led by the huge song-leader, a rotund gentleman who strode about the stage, limp as to collar, but vigorous in the extreme as to actions, adding very considerably to the universal joviality by certain physically jocose antics which he threw in entirely on his own hook, and which were a source of the purest joy to the delighted Marines below him.

The two Generals, together with an enraptured Bunny, slipped quietly into the seats that Tom was holding for them in the double row marked "Officers", while Wardy, unable to recognize one enlisted man from another in the general darkness, scuffled valiantly toward a favorite seat of his, about half way from the stage, and in the exact middle of one of the long rows, giving and receiving all manner of gibes and low-chuckling expostulations as he stepped on other fellows' feet, or was pulled down strongly, and held for a few seconds, on some other Marine's lap.

Whether he would ever have been allowed to trample his way successfully over the legs of his

cheerfully protesting comrades to the haven he sought, is unknown, for fate was kind to him for, on the screen in front was suddenly flashed: “MARINES’ HYMN,” which meant that everyone in the hall must stand, and so, as the mass of healthy, young manhood jumped to its legs, Wardy made a dive, and scuttled to his favorite seat, and then stood with the rest, strangely, potently thrilled, as he always was, by the triumphant high-heartedness of this Marines’ song—*his* song—echoing the spirit of the Corps in its youthfully gay, buoyant words, and inspiring tune, his heart pounding in his plump, young breast, his eyes dancing, and bright and clear with an honest purpose to make good for the Corps he was learning to love above himself, his lusty, young body a’tingle with the glory—and God knows, it *is* a glory, boys!—of being a marine, with its reward of a man’s scholastic education, his for the taking, and an officer’s commission, his for the working for it, a look of absolute joy, and pride, and cheerful, entirely self-reliant swagger about the whole of him, from the top of his closely cropped, fluffy, tow-colored head, down to the pinky-brown soles of his firmly planted feet.

To the thundering words of the third verse he owed all the triumphant, almost choking, sensation of youthful glorification in the Corps—his

own Corps—; to the snappy pertness of the last verse his boyish swagger, with its accompaniment of unconsciously squared shoulders, and cheerful, cocksure grin, as hundreds of men's voices rolled, in a sort of tumbling sonority through the great building, with all the deep, wide, gloriously free sweep of the ocean—as much their home as the land to these Soldiers of the Sea—the song-leader quite unneeded now—these sun-browned young fellows, clean limbed and high-hearted knights errant as any of King Arthur's best, shouting, in deep-throated jubilation, their own faith in their own Corps, as might a body of medieval monks their *Credo*:

“ ‘When we were called across the sea
To stand for home and right;
With the spirit of the brave and free
We fought with all our might.
When we helped to stop the Germans' drive
They said we fought like fiends;
And the French rechristened Belleau Wood
For United States Marines.

“ ‘Here's a health to you and to our Corps,
Which we are proud to serve;
In many a strife we've fought for life,
And never lost our nerve—
If the Army and the Navy
Ever look on heaven's scenes,
They will find the streets are guarded by
The UNITED STATES MARINES.’ ”

Bunny and Tom, glancing up at the General, saw that his stout, uniformed figure was held very erect, his eyes steely, and looking far, far off, but his grim mouth showed a quietly tender smile as he rather absently drew the Brigadier's boy close to him, and rumbled his dusty-brown head with a clumsy gentleness—his thoughts on all his own boys, dead in this same rechristened Belleau Wood, or at Chateau-Thierry, or in Haiti, or the wide world over, wherever his Marines had died, or were now dying, with the courage of the gallant gentlemen they are, that other men may follow, and succeed, in the trail blazed by their own stalwart, young lives.

The singing was over for the evening, and the orchestra struck up the jazziest of jazz airs, while the song-leader, amid lots of good-natured laughter, reeled off the stage in an exhausted condition, as the cinema man prepared to flash on the first of the evening's films, always a comic.

Wardy, in the darkness, turned to his neighbor.

“Say!” he began, with his most friendly grin, “What's the Comic to-night, matey? I've got my pinky-card from the Chaplain's office, but it's too blamed dark to read it.”

“It's Charlie Chaplin and Edna Purviance, Waffles,” came back the even-toned reply out of the gloom.

The stout, little marine mopped his face, rage

in his heart. Yank Hanson was his neighbor! His evening was all spoiled. With added resentment, and with actually a rather big, choky lump rising in his throat (though he would have undoubtedly punched the head of any other fellow silly enough to have said so), he reached one hand into his pants pocket, and closed the brown fingers over a good sized, paper bag, warm from contact with his own sturdy leg, and just chock full of peanut taffy. Wardy had spent all of thirty-five cents for this treat for himself, and all day long, out working on the leveling of the new parade ground like a beaver in the morning, and in the school all the afternoon, he had been looking forward mightily to sitting through the entire movie show to-night, in his favorite seat, eating all of his favorite candy he wanted to. He was, so the Marine Corps Institute said, doing splendidly in his English, but could they have heard him at this trying moment, their golden opinion of his progress might have been changed.

"You done it a'purpose, Yank Hanson!" he growled, his always deep, somewhat lazily soft, southern voice quite gruff. "You knew I 'most always take this old seat, an'—an' you done it a'purpose, an' I'll smash your face for you if you'll only get liberty next Saturday so we can do it in peace. That face of yours sure does *need* smashin', Yank. Honest!"

CHAPTER VI

THE FEUD

*"'As anybody seen Bill 'Awkins?
Now 'ow in the devil should I know?
'E's taken my girl out walkin',
'An I wants to tell 'im so—
Gawd—bless—'im!
I wants to tell 'im so."*

(—Rudyard Kipling.)

Have any of you been lucky enough to see Charles Ray in "the Old Swimmin' Hole"? If you have, then you will have a good enough idea of "Yank" Hanson, a boy one year Warfield's senior, black headed, sturdy, a bit loose jointed, a bit clumsy, but in a mischievous, lovable way as a frolicksome bear-cub is clumsy, a boy not only handsome, but, which is a lot better, possessed of a most engaging face, who can cut his brown eyes at another boy with a look so impish that, if done at a girl, it would be called flirtatious.

Yank was adored of his Company, adored of his regiment, adored of the barracks—officers always excepted, sad to say—but he hated Wardy Brown, and Wardy, helpless in his honest desire

to live up to what he considered a good marine should be, had but one wish on his side, nevertheless, to give Yank a licking, or get licked himself. Yank was bigger than Wardy, besides being nineteen to Wardy's eighteen. And the *casus belli*? Well, Wardy had taken away Yank's buddy, and, next to taking away another marine's "girl", that is the most unpardonable of sins.

Yank and Larry Bluff had entered the Corps on the same day, from the same recruiting station. They had been in South Carolina, at Paris Island, together, and had comforted each other during the more or less trying times of their first three months' novitiate. Wardy had arrived at Paris Island one week later, and his tow head, and his sturdy purposefulness, his quick, pugnacious disposition, and, above all, his sun-browned skin (only his legs retained all their original whiteness, for not only his face, and throat, but his entire body—shoulders, back, chest, and stomach, were all a smooth, satiny, tan color), had made him a mark for the mischievous Yank, and his joking had been so rough that, though anything in the world but a "sissy", Larry Bluff had become disgusted, and had ended by going over to his present buddy with a warm hearted loyalty rather funny in such an impu-

dent type of youngster, admiring, at first in spite of himself, the spunky way the stout, little marine had held his glowering anger in hand, just because he was determined to make good in the Corps, and free fighting was certainly not looked upon any too kindly by the authorities at Paris Island.

Wardy, mystified, and hurt, and shamed by Yank's practical joking, was not a quick enough boy to have either the ready words to meet one kind of the nineteen-year-old's methods, nor inventive enough to think up physical deeds to meet those that Yank inflicted on him at odd times. He was nearer crying, probably, than he had ever been since he had first thrust his legs into long pants, and why? Well, because he wanted to fight. That was the one answer he knew how to give to the things Yank did, and said, to him that vexed his body, and his soul. And Wardy fought most beautifully, there was no denying that fact. And, knowing he could tease him, and "rough-house" him to his heart's content, without getting into a regular fight—nothing more than an occasional punch—Yank Hanson continued to prey on Wardy Brown, with the result that he lost a buddy, and Wardy gained one, and this not only made Yank very mad, it really hurt his feelings, for there is no

doubt about it, he and Larry Bluff were just cut out to be chums. What piece of mischief the one forgot, the other would have been sure to remember.

Of only one thing was Yank shy in regard to his bodily development. He had very big, though perfectly well shaped, feet, and this fact was a real glorification to the stout, little marine, in part, at least, offsetting his own tow-colored head, and golden-brown skin.

And now, sitting in his favorite seat, with a whole pound of his favorite candy in his pocket, with his favorite comedian before him, but with murder in his heart none the less, Warfield Brown cudgeled his brains valiantly for some means of getting even with his nineteen-year-old enemy, but with no result other than to almost worry himself sick.

At the end of the Comic, one of William Hart's real masterpieces in melodrama began, and Wardy, for a while, became far too pleasantly thrilled over "Bill" and his bronco to bother about anything else in the world, applauding earnestly at the hero's daredevil escape in the last reel, just as if the hero could have heard him, and fairly burning with fury at the cruel treatment, which he pronounced solemnly to himself was "too tough for any nice girl," which "Little

Nugget, the old prospector's daughter," received at the hands of the Mexican bravos until the timely arrival of the hero, plus the aforementioned bronco, and a couple of "trusty forty-fives," of course.—What would a "Bill" Hart film be, I wonder, without broncos, Colt forty-fives, and dear, young, wild things like "Little Nugget, the old prospector's daughter"—but most of all, without enthusiastic youngsters, still in their 'teens, to watch it?

The show over, and the lights on, the men began to troop out, most of them heading for the Hostess House across the way, there to just loaf, or to fill up on ice cream, and cake, and salads, and coffee, and cigarettes to their hearts' content.

Now it just happened that the two generals and their two boy companions, had stepped to one side of an exit to chat once more with the Chaplain, and Lieutenant "Chet" Hume, too, and the gymnasium was about half empty when they started to descend the wooden steps, the General moving a bit ponderously, and the Brigadier, in front, skipping down with as much ease as his own twelve-year-old son.

On the next to the last step the General paused a second, to call the attention of the Chaplain to the fact that the moon was beginning to break through the rain clouds at last, and as he did so,

someone fairly catapulted against his broad, olive drab back, and with such force that he would have fallen, had not the agile Brigadier grabbed him. At the same moment, a slight giggle sounded from the top-most step, though from whom it was hard to say, for the enlisted men who were still crowding out of doors, had stopped, as if frozen, genuine dismay writ openly on their faces that such a piece of insubordinate rudeness should have happened to their General, while on a visit to their barracks.

The General, after steadying himself for a second, with one hand on the Brigadier's gold-starred shoulder, wheeled 'round, and beheld, really to his consternation, the good-looking, round face of Private Warfield Brown, U. S. M. C., a dark red blush suffusing his brown skin, a look at once scared, and very mad, showing in his eyes, his fists doubled up, tight and hard.

“Good Lord, man! Did—did you *hit* me?” the General gasped, eyeing Wardy's tough fists in utter astonishment, while the Brigadier called very softly to young Corliss, who came on the run, blowing his M. P.'s whistle for the guard to turn out, as he did so.

Wardy unclenched his hands, and saluted.

“No sir!” he blurted out, his face changing now from red to a dead white—to strike an officer is no laughing matter.

"Then why did you try to throw me down, eh?" from the General, getting more and more cool and self-possessed as he got more and more angry.

"I didn't mean to do it, sir!" Wardy defended, choking down a hotly rising anger within him the very best he could. "I wouldn't have done it for nothin'—for anything, I mean, sir."

Three M. P.s had now arrived on the run—you might even say on the gallop—and had joined Corliss at the foot of the steps, their revolvers held ready in their hands belligerently, all glaring at the marine who had nearly upset, and possibly struck, their General.

And now the Brigadier spoke, his voice like ice:

"Put that man under arrest, Sergeant!" he said to the senior "non-com." among the M. P.'s. "General, you know before I say it that I am too ashamed about all this to even know how to apologize—and every man feels just the same, I know."

A low, ominous growl of assent from the enlisted men, massed at the gymnasium exit, gave hearty, and also threatening, assent.

"Daddy!" it was Bunny, his high, boyish voice quite tense with indignation, "Wardy—Brown, I mean—didn't mean to do that. That fellow behind pushed him—sort of kicked him on one

ankle as he was going down the steps, and he just tumbled forward. Honest that's straight, Daddy. I saw him when he did it, and I heard that guy giggle when Brown slipped."

Bunny was every inch his Dad's son, and every inch a Marine officer's boy, and not a grown man present felt more keen anger, more keen shame at the indignity done to the visiting General than he, and he was so mad that his hard, little paw trembled as he pointed one stumpy, brown finger at Yank Hanson—as white now as the stout, little marine standing most forlornly on the ground below him, between Corliss and another M. P.

"That's right, sor!" spoke up the irate voice of Sergeant Michael O'Donnivan Bowker, his gray mustache fairly bristling with fury as he elbowed his way down the steps, "I saw ut myself, sor, and w'ud 'ave reported ut at wance had not yer young bhoy have bate me to ut. Hanson kicked Brown on th' tindon above his left heel, an' the poor bhoy just stumbled over on the General, sor! And ut's disgraced we are entirely, the Lord help us!"

"*That* so?" snapped the Brigadier. "Sergeant, release Brown and put Private Hanson under arrest. Of course you must appear in this tomorrow, Brown. I will handle this dirty busi-

ness myself, at Headquarters, in the morning. Take the names of those men who were on the steps, Sergeant. Come, General! Not hurt, are you?"

"Hurt?" from the General, speaking perfectly quietly. "Of course not. But I'm ashamed. Man, I'm ashamed all over to think we have a *cad* in our Corps! That man stood still, and was ready to let Brown, here, go under arrest on really grave charges, and Brown, from mistaken chivalry I guess, would not tell on him. Hanson!" wheeling in sudden, lionlike anger on the good-looking nineteen-year-old, looking broken and really sick among the marine police, "in all my service, and there has been a good many years of it, thank God! you are the very first coward I ever met among the United States Marines!" and, saluting his men—and a deeply worried lot of young fellows they looked—he stepped out briskly, the Brigadier, the Chaplain, "Chet" Hume, and the two boys forming a sort of distressed, indignant squad around him.

CHAPTER VII

SHADOWS

"I am the average man. There isn't a single thing I do that isn't done better by some man I know. I shoot only fairly well. I play bumble-puppy tennis. Most men on the Elkhorn rode better than I can ever hope to ride. I'm just the average man—but, by George, I work at it harder than the average man!"

(—Theodore Roosevelt.)

*"The shadow of the balusters, the shadow of the lamp,
The shadow of the child that goes to bed—
All the wicked shadows coming, tramp, tramp,
tramp,
With the black night overhead."*

(—Robert Louis Stevenson.)

The upper quotation to this chapter so very exactly fits our husky friend, Private Warfield Brown, U. S. M. C., that it is worth while to note it pretty carefully.

He was, in ability, just the average normal, healthy boy of eighteen, vigorous, earnest, and

very much alive, and possessed, too, of a big share of somewhat cumbersome fun—a moving picture “Comic” was far more delightful to him than any funny story in print could ever hope to be. But, like Theodore Roosevelt, Wardy “tried harder than the average man,” and in that, considering his very pugnacious nature, he deserved all manner of credit. He had won, quite recently, a medal for marksmanship over on the big rifle range, and this was a source of great satisfaction to him, to put it very mildly. Likewise, and this was even more delightful to our stout, little marine, Chet had told him openly that his age was the one thing keeping him from getting his Corporal’s chevrons—and that time, of necessity, would cure that defect.

Therefore it was with a most contented spirit that Wardy, a few days after the arrest of Yank Hanson, stepped out briskly from his barracks in the 49th Company, toward the study hall shacks of the Camp Ross end of the Marine Corps Institute, humming a morose song, in spite of his cheerfully beating heart, an old parody first invented, so far as I know, among the marines at Camp Elliott, at Bas Obispo, in Panama, the refrain of which, in Wardy’s perfectly happy, if somewhat unmusical, young voice, ran thus:

"The Marine Corps
The Marine Corps,—
(They do such things, and they say such things!)—
The Marine Corps,
The Marine Corps,—
(Oh, I'll never ship over again!)"

"Yay, Wardy!"

The stout, little marine stopped, turned 'round, and then grinned widely as he recognized Corporal "Wally" Falworth, mounted on a big, black horse, by name "Ginger".

"Yay, Wally! Where you going on that Ginger-horse? I'd rather ride that mount than anything at barracks!"

"So would I!" the Corporal assented with a laugh, "but that's not why I'm riding him at present. The Brigadier 'phoned down to send up Ginger to his quarters, along with old Sadie. He and Bunny are going for a gallop, somewhere up the Dolittle road. I was the only man around, 'cept Ned Chalmers, so I left him at the stables, and I'm on my way up hill. Bunny's going to walk over from his school—it's out in half an hour—and get old Sadie, and meet the Brigadier down near the depot."

"Well, say, Wally!" Wardy Brown expostulated, "What you trotting all the way to Barnett Avenue for, if you're s'posed to be on

your way to the Post Commandant's quarters!"

"Because I'm a good-natured guy, Wardy!" Wally Falworth answered from his saddle. "That's why. I've been looking for you. Larry Bluff came helloing into the stables a couple of minutes ago, and asked me, since I had this mount between my legs, to look you up, and ask you to meet him at the Hostess House on your way to the school."

"Thanks a lot, Wally!" the stout, little marine beamed—and then, quite suddenly, became perfectly wooden, got just as stiff as a boy could get, and saluted most snappily, as Major Nathaniel Pokey, fat and red-faced, waddled past, hesitated, stopped, and then, wheeling around, bore down on Wardy, a broad smile on his face, while Walter Falworth, after saluting, swung off at a brisk canter.

"Just wanted to tell you, Brown," the Major said genially to the still utterly wooden, little marine, "that we're rather pleased over the manly way you acted in this Hanson business the other day. Colonel McArthur and I have just finished reviewing the papers in that case and, by George! here's old Bowker, and Annisby, and Cortrell, all of the 5th, and Falworth, and Smith, and Diago, of the 10th, and that young Corliss, of the M. P.'s, all giving evidence that Hanson had

plagued the life out of you ever since you've been here—and before that, according to Annisby's deposition, at Paris Island, too—and that you've taken it like the man you have proved yourself to be, waiting, I have no doubt," here the Major chuckled fatly, "until—oh, well!—until something turns up; a couple of days of mutual liberty, say! Unfortunately, since Hanson is now residing in the Brig, he won't have liberty very soon, not even when he gets out, and, upon my word, that rather seems a pity, for he needs a thrashing, by Gosh! But the part that pleases us is, that with all this evidence against Hanson, not only from the men in your own Regiment, the 5th, but from the men in the 10th, also, the Court got very, very little from you yourself—it didn't try so very hard, to be frank, because it liked your spunk in not wanting to blab. And, for it does no harm, I thought I'd tell you, since we've met this way so entirely by chance, what the Brigadier said to Colonel McArthur just now. He said: 'By George, Colonel! That Brown boy is what I call a *good* marine!' and no one can give higher praise to a man than that," and, again exchanging salutes with the overjoyed Wardy, the good, old Major trotted up Barnett Avenue, where, just around the corner from where he and Warfield had been talking, he ran into his

best friend, Lieutenant Colonel McArthur, the Post Adjutant.

Colonel McArthur was just as fat as Major Pokey, but was much taller, and they had been pals since their knickerbocker days.

"Mac!" Major Pokey accused belligerently. "You were listening!"

"You bet I was, old son!" the Colonel grinned. "Oh, you old fraud! Tossing around official secrets to the first tow-headed boy you meet. Shame on you, Nat Pokey!"

"Well, but look here, you old gaby!" the Major chuckled meeting his gray-headed chum's look squarely, grin for grin. "*You* said, up at Headquarters, that Brown had been terribly cut on the raw by all this business, that Chet Hume had told you all about it, and you also said somebody ought to let him know the way the Brigadier General Commandant felt about it. And therefore, you old fish, I told him. Now, darn you, Mac! Shoot!"

"You old whale!" quoth the Lieutenant Colonel, poking the Major in the ribs, "wasn't I clipping down Barnett Avenue at my very best speed—at least a mile an hour, ha! ha!—to fix it so I could meet that boy casually—had to be done casually, of course—and pass on the good word to him?"

"Yah, you old humbug!" from Major Pokey, and:

"Yah, you grizzled fraud!" from Colonel McArthur, and off they waddled to partake of a cheerless cup of tea at the Hotel Ross, while Wardy, his brown face radiant, fairly walked on air as he made the sweeping curve, a bit out of his way, that took him to the Hostess House.

"Well!" he laughed aloud, though he merely thought the rest. "Wish some of that uplift bunch of old grannies I read about in the paper the other evening could have heard the Major talking to me! Talk about Corps spirit! That's our middle name, by Gosh! I've been in the Corps 'bout a year, and I've never known an officer to miss a chance of encouraging an enlisted man yet! Doggone it! Our officers like us, you bet! And they're proud of us, and I reckon that's why we'll always go through fire for 'em when they give us half a chance! They're a square bunch, our officers, and—and I think we're on the square, too!"

"Say!" from Larry Bluff, fairly bounding down the few steps of the Hostess House at this moment, "What are you grinning about, Wardy? Look as happy as the Hard Boiled Egg did the other day, when the General complimented the old heathen on his 'perfect discipline'."

Warfield at once told his buddy of what he had heard from the Major, whereat Larry Bluff slapped him on the back most joyously.

"And you *are* a good marine, Wardy, old scout!" he rejoiced. "And I'm glad all over that the Brigadier thinks the same as me. It's always nice to know the Brigadier General Commandant holds the proper opinions!"

"Crazy in the head with the heat!" chuckled the stout, little marine. "Say! Wally Falworth told me you wanted to tell me something. Is that honest? If so, hurry up, 'cause I want to get over to the school, and get a line on this beastly, old English stuff. The mechanical engineering's just great, but this English! Wooff!"

Larry Bluff suddenly became quite solemn:

"Look here, Wardy!" he said, very soberly indeed. "I've been talking just a little bit to Yank Hanson, and—and I think he's going nutty—honest I do!"

"Aw, Yank's done that already!" very cheerfully, from the stout, little marine. "He did that when he tried to make a buck private, like me, sit down on top of a Major General."

"No, but I'm serious, Wardy!" Larry Annisby interrupted. "You see, Corliss had a couple of the guys from the Brig out mending a drain, and—and—well! Corliss is an all right sort of kid,

if he is an M. P.—and so, while he stood guard over 'em, he let Yank speak to me a bit, 'cause Yank begged so hard. I felt sort of sorry for old Yank, 'cause he had his shoes and socks off, and his pants rolled up above his knees, working in that squashy mud, and the second he saw me coming he slid his big feet under the mud—'cause you and I've guyed him about 'em, I guess—and that sort of tickled me, Yank's such a big guy, and he looked so funny, and shy, with his bare legs, and his feet hiding in the mud, and so I started in singing that crazy, old song about '*I'd rather be on the outside lookin' in, than on the inside lookin' out!*' and Wardy! What you s'pose? Yank didn't get one bit mad, though he sure did color up, all right—even his bare shoulders got sort of pink—but all he said was—was—was: 'Larry Bluff!' he said, 'You can't get a rise out of me! You s'pose I'm going to get sore at a fellow who's sent me all the cigarettes, and fifteen-cent cigars, and good chow to eat, that you have?' Well, I 'most tumbled over into the drain my own self, Wardy! Blamed if I've ever sent Yank anything since he's been in the Brig! He's been too rotten for me to want to touch him with a ten-foot pole. I told him so, too, but all he did was to color up some more, and look sort of hurt in his feelings, and keep on smiling, and

looking big and shy, and thank me all over again for sticking to him in his tough luck—only it isn't tough luck at all; it's just what he ought to get, and—and blamed if I don't think he's off his head, Wardy!"

"Aw, no he ain't, Larry Bluff!" Wardy answered, grave himself now. "Lots of the fellows liked Yank before this last business, and I reckon some one else sent him that stuff—smokes, and eats, and all,—but he knew you used to be his buddy, down at Paris Island, so of course he thought it must be you. That's about the size of it. Well, so long! Here I am at the school shacks, worse luck! Aw, say! Trot on inside a second, and let's see what's the latest about 'Private Slabs'."

Larry Bluff assented with a quick chuckle, and both marines strode at once into one of the frame buildings.

In a long room to the right of the entrance, a lot of the uniformed men were pounding typewriters, or working over their shorthand notes, this work to be sent on later to the headquarters of the Marine Corps Institute, in Washington, which works in co-operation with the great International Correspondence School.

Wardy, and Larry Bluff, turned to the left, however, entering the first of two long rooms,

equipped with tables, chairs, and several Victrolas, about each of which several marines were clustered, with open books, learning Spanish and French conversation, with the aid of the machines.

Passing on through this room they found the haven for which they sought, a room hung round with posters, water colors, and cartoons, all the work of the marines who were studying this sort of well-paying subject, or drafting, if they preferred, and, with the sureness born of a fetish worshiper, Wardy at once pounced upon the latest set of cartoons concerning the adventures of poor "Private Slabs," a set of drawings as utterly funny as anything ever done by Bairnsfather himself—clever, and humorous, and full of the absurdly innocent blunders of the said "Private Slabs," chiefly in his official relations with his officers. A most friendly, cumberse-minded, young soul is "Private Slabs," and if the marine who has created him—Private Shores—doesn't share at least one of "Bud" Fisher's shoes one of these days, it will be because America is losing her sense of humor. They are the American edition of "Ole Bill," and "Alf," and "Bert."

Wardy simply adored "Private Slabs," and he giggled so enthusiastically over this unfortunate young man's error in endeavoring to borrow a

cigarette from a General, after telling him, while on post, to "advance friend, and be recognized," that at last Larry Bluff had to resort to punching in order to get this tow-headed buddy of his away, and over to the English class in another building, after which, as Larry was studying the less ambitious trade of an automobile mechanic, he ran as hard as his slim legs would carry him until he reached Big Bear Avenue, and out this rather vague thoroughfare, across the railroad tracks, toward the auto shops, and the more distant concrete pier, at which lay a small submarine chaser, and, just before turning into the shops, he almost butted into the Brigadier, and his son.

Both riders reined up quickly.

"One minute!" the Brigadier called pleasantly. "You're Annisby, of the 49th Company, of the 5th, aren't you?"

"Aw, heck, Daddy! Sure he is!" a bit indignantly, from Bunny, his hair much towseled by hard galloping. "Didn't I just tell you so?"

"To be sure you did, son!" the Brigadier laughed. "Well, look here, Annisby! My boy tells me you are counted one of the really crack riders in the 5th. Is that so?"

Larry Bluff grinned, but quite demurely, though he blushed, too, as he saluted.

"Yes sir!" he answered, as polite and aggressively modest (the young imp!) as a boy could be.

"Glad you think so!" a bit grimly, from the Brigadier. "Well, my boy says you've often ridden this mount of mine. Did you ever know Ginger to shy?"

"No *sir!*" in honest vehemence, from the impudent-faced marine. "Ginger's got a heap of pep, sir, but he's absolutely reliable. He never shies, not even at a train, or at a big piece of newspaper in the road, or at anything, sir."

"So I always thought myself," the Brigadier assented, "and yet, out on the Dolittle road this afternoon, we came to a spot near an old hedge of mock orange, and Ginger nearly threw me, he shied so suddenly, and violently, and then, after I pulled him up, blamed if I could make him go by the spot for a full minute, and when I did at last make him, he shot off at a regular racing gallop. Coming back, I stopped and let Bunny hold the bridle, while I looked about for a bit, but there was nothing in the world there except a torn, dirty scrap of white wrapping paper, such as you see at the drug stores, in Dolittle, for instance, to wrap up packages of cigarettes, and things of that sort, with a bit of an address scrawled on it, in pencil, so badly rubbed, and dirtied up by the mud, that all I

made out were the letters 'H-A-N-S-', which is neither here nor there, of course. At all events, it was nothing for Ginger to cut up about. He never behaved so before, I know that. Of course," with a suddenly mischievous glance at his sturdy twelve-year-old, "Sadie behaved beautifully. Any excuse for a good rest is always welcome to that spirited charger of Bunny," and, while Larry Bluff began to laugh, the Brigadier trotted off, his boy, blushing, and grinning a bit shamefacedly, too, shaking one tough fist at his beloved Dad, and patting his own, old mare with a protective sort of affection at the same time. Bunny loved his old "Sadie-horse," no matter what anybody else said.

CHAPTER VIII

"TO WILL TO GO"

"Thither one journeyeth not in ships, nor in chariots, nor on foot; for to journey thither, nay even to arrive there, is nothing but to will to go."

(—St. Augustine.)

"Ut's a har-rd thing that don't be for showin' some bit av good in ut, Whardy, me b'y!"

Thus spake that most hard boiled of Sergeants, Michael O'Donnivan Bowker, U. S. M. C., as he sat on the edge of a wheel barrow, watching with both an expert, and a pitilessly cold eye, the men at work on some excavations for new buildings at Camp Ross.

"Sure it is!" from the stout, little marine, mopping his flushed face earnestly, and hazard-ing one of his most friendly grins, though the Sergeant's remark quite entirely mystified him.

"Well," quoth the Hard Boiled Egg, with a fat chuckle, "ut's quite *rejoiced* I am to hear ye say so, Whardy! for, beytwain the two av us, me son; ut's *emazed* I am to know ye have iny sort av an *idea* av phwat I'm dhrivin' at."

Wardy blushed, only he was already so hot, and so streamingly wet, that it was impossible to notice it.

"You mean—you mean—" he floundered, looking nervously at the Hard Boiled Egg.

"Aye, an' phwat *did* I mane, Whardy?" Sergeant Bowker grinned.

Wardy looked sulky:

"I dunno!" he owned up.

"Shure, an' I was after knowin' that, me b'y!" the Sergeant laughed. "Will, I was aludin' to th' blessin' ut is to these barricks that that young spalpeen av a Kildare is gone from among us—bad luck to 'im! Wid a name on him like Kildare, I'll confess to yez, Whardy, that I had high hopes for that man—but divil a bit av good was there in him, all the same. His thraymint av th' horses alone was a dishgrace to th' post, an' wan av th' greatest ambitions av me life is to lock the big lummox up in a box-stall wid Ginger, an' thin return in half an hour to gather up th' remains. Horses niver forgit thim as trates 'em cruel, ye know, an' I've even heard ut said that if iver they so much as git th' scint av a monsther man like Kildare, they'll be for goin' plum wild. An', spakin' av monsther min, phwat av yer young frind, Yank Hanson?—may th' banshees take his pretty face!"

Wardy scowled.

"Aw, *I* dunno, Sergeant!" he flung back gruffly, "'cept that he'll be out of the Brig some-time to-day. Corliss told me that much," and he resumed his work, which, just to encourage more interest in the digging, the Hard Boiled Egg persisted in referring to most euphoniously as "trinch practice."

It was about two weeks since Yank Hanson's luckless escapade on the steps of the gymnasium, and, as young Corliss had told Warfield, he would be back in company barracks in a few hours.

The faint, asthmatic chugging of an auto was heard upon the wind, lumbering along the very rough bit of newly made road leading to the excavations, whereat the Hard Boiled Egg rose to his feet, thrust forward his thick, bull neck, and became what he would himself have termed "most efficient."

"Go to ut, ye sleepy childer!" he bellowed, fairly dancing about from one group of sweating, young marines to another. "'Tis not for th' joy av ut that ye be out here, me b'ys! Nor yit for ohrnimints, the Lord knows! Wan peep at th' ugly mugs av yez would queer that *idea*! Go to ut, me dears! Take th' worrud av an auld stager like Mike Bowker, that ut's most enchanted ye should all be at th' illagint practice in trinch diggin' I'm after givin' ye at this moment!"

The car had by this time driven up close to the fat, perspiring Sergeant, and had stopped, with a sound like unto a sigh of utter relief. It was young Chet Hume's "chummy roadster," and it was evidently overly "chummy" for this hot day in the first week of July, for five officers, and two dogs, fairly hurled themselves from it.

Once separated, they dissolved themselves into Chet, Major Pokey, Lieutenant-Colonel McArthur, the Chaplain, and one of the General's Aide-de-Camps, from Washington.

"There's the spot!" most enthusiastically, from the corpulent Adjutant (Lieutenant Colonel McArthur), turning to the A. D. C. from Headquarters, and pointing a fat finger, with open pride. "That's where our officers' Club will stand, Captain! Up to date we've had no place for ourselves, unless you count the hotel—which heaven forbid! The men have several places, chiefest among which, of course, is the Hostess House, and it was entirely right for us to wait until they were fixed up comfortably. See the place I mean, eh?"

"Where?" rather blankly, from the A. D. C. "In that hole, do you mean, Colonel, or up among that clump of poison oak?"

"No, no, Captain!" the Chaplain struck in laughingly, noting a glint of fire in the Adju-

tant's weather eye. "That big, newly excavated spot to your right. Good location, don't you think? And it will be jolly for us to have a place of our own in which to smoke, and loaf to our hearts' content, only I entirely agree with Colonel McArthur, of course, that it was absolutely right for the enlisted men to get their diggins first. Excuse me for shouting, but old Bowker is bawling so that it's hard to hear yourself think. By George! what a bellow that Non. Com. has!"

"He'd make all sorts of a good bull, eh, Chaplain?" from Chet, as he strolled up from his panting, little roadster, Major Pokey at his side.

"You bet he would, Chet!" the Chaplain chuckled. "By the way, there's young Brown! Now's a good chance for us to talk to him for a couple of minutes, while the Adjutant and Major Pokey are showing the General's A. D. C. the sights."

"Right-o, Chaplain!" Chet assented eagerly. "Lead the way!" and they walked over to where the stout, little marine was standing quite still, gazing most resentfully at a big rock he had just unearthed, and gloomily nursing certain blisters on his hands, his gauze undershirt so wet that it clung to his plump body like the skin beneath it, outlining the almost perfect muscular development below it.

"I say, Brown!" young Chet began, after the usual saluting. "The Chaplain tells me he's a perfectly good sermon to deliver to you, and I've brought him over here on purpose."

"Aw, Gee!" very blankly, from Wardy. "What've I done now, sir?"

He looked so badly worried that both officers burst out laughing.

"Tut, tut, Wardy!" the Chaplain smiled, balancing his stout body back and forth on his booted heels while he talked. "Is your conscience as guilty as all that?"

"I—I dunno, sir!" Wardy blurted out, still looking miserable. "I ain't—haven't, I mean—done a thing I'm 'shamed of, but a fellow can't always be sure. And a sermon's 'most always to tough guys, and rough necks, isn't it, sir?"

"Not quite always, Wardy!" the Chaplain answered, much amused. "This is really just a text I'm going to give you, and you must preach your own sermon therefrom. Lieutenant Hume says he wanted very much to make a Corporal out of you, but your age, of course, stood in the way, especially in the 5th, where there are so many re-enlisted men."

"Yessir!" in one word, from the stout, little marine, at once grateful, and gloomy—Wardy at the moment longed for nothing so much as the flowing, white beard of an ancient prophet.

"Well," the Chaplain continued, trying manfully not to laugh as he watched Wardy running a dirty, brown hand very earnestly over a soft, absolutely smooth chin. "Lieutenant Hume talked to me about it, and to your Colonel, too. We all feel you're too young."

"Yessir!" the one word a little sulky this time—the Chaplain need not rub in this embarrassing truth so.

"*But,*" with sudden animation, from the uniformed divine, "a lot of the men's time expires to-day, and, I am sorry to say, there are not as many re-enlistments in the 5th as there should be, and so Lieutenant Hume has recommended you for Corporal, and the Colonel has O.K.'d it. And I'm glad, Wardy!"

"Aw, *Chaplain*, sir!"

It was all Wardy Brown found words for, but the very widest, most radiantly friendly of his entire supply of grins settled so joyously on his young mouth that both officers realized more than ever how entirely this husky, tow-headed boy of eighteen had given his heart to the Marine Corps.

"And let me add, Brown," spoke up Chet Hume, "that the person who immediately recommended you to me for promotion was Sergeant Bowker."

"*Honest?*" in blank amazement, from the stout,

little marine. "The Hard Boiled Egg?—Aw, Gosh! I *beg* your pardon, sir! I—I didn't mean to say that!"

"Yes," Chet smiled. "The Hard Boiled Egg, as you call him. So be just a little bit more charitable in your judgments in the future. Don't you think so, Brown?"

"Oh, *yes*, sir!" Wardy assented, very humbly.

"And Wardy!" from the Chaplain. "You want to stick in the Corps and get your Commission. I know that, and so does Lieutenant Hume, here. Well, of course that is out of the question until you're twenty-one, or over, but then, as the good St. Augustine said about heaven—indeed I mean no light irreverence, Chet!—'Thither one journeyeth not in ships, nor in chariots, nor on foot; for to journey thither, nay even to arrive there, is nothing but to will to go.' And so it is with a boy like you, with an officer's commission before his eyes, Wardy. There's no short cut. It's holding straight, and living clean, and learning the Corps just because you love the Corps, and feel it in your heart to be the holiest thing this side of Divinity itself; its life, your life; its honor, your honor. And there's no easy road—There's no short cut. Only just what St. Augustine says: '*to will to go*'; only, of course, he was talking of heaven."

Wardy, really pale now, under his thick coating of tan, looked solemnly at the two officers, his round face peculiarly, engagingly young, but manly, too:

"Chaplain, sir!" he said, his low voice very husky, and something very near a break in it, too, "It's just the same. 'To will to go' for my commission would be heaven to me."

CHAPTER IX

CIGARETTES

"The Duke of Gloster:

*Why, I can smile, and murder while I smile;
And cry content to that which grieves my
heart;*

*And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions."*

(—William Shakespeare.)

*"In the spring a livelier iris comes upon the bur-
nished dove;*

*In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns
to thoughts of love."*

(—Alfred, Lord Tennyson.)

Yank Hanson's release from the Brig occurred on schedule time, as foretold by Corliss, M. P., and, the very second he stepped back, once more, into freedom, his company commander, in genuine distress, handed him a telegram, telling him of the violent illness of his grandmother, and Yank had no one in the world as close to him, for he, like Warfield, was an orphan, and the big boy looked so honestly broken up by the news

that the Captain, in spite of the youngster's recent prank, went out of his way to be good to him, and, after a talk with the Adjutant, and then with the Brigadier himself, won for the usually mischievous Yank two days' liberty, in spite of his unsound record, and the boy, big and husky though he was, broke down and cried when he thanked them, for he loved his grandmother better than anybody else in the world, though, all during his small boyhood, he had plagued the good, old lady almost to distraction.

Wardy and Larry Bluff heard the news that same evening from that most eagerly efficient of modern town criers, Corliss, M. P., and the stout, little marine received the intelligence in a most ruffled spirit. Not that he was not very sorry for Yank Hanson's grandmother to be so sick, but because the granting of liberty immediately after being let out of the Brig, would, of necessity, make the authorities more slow than ever to allow Yank liberty again, and this meant that that most devoutly longed for fight would have to be postponed—and, if the poor, old lady should not get well, Wardy even feared that it might not be "nice" to beat Yank up, in the midst of his mortuary sorrows. He had liberty himself for the next two days, Saturday and Sunday, but so upset was he at the tidings of Corliss, M. P.,

that he looked forward to his holiday with very little pleasure.

Now Yank's grandmother lived in Balentree, and was a very old lady, inclined to be timid where her own bodily ills were concerned. That was the reason for wiring her good-looking grandson that she was dying. She thought, for about ten minutes, that she was. Her complaint was this. A wasp had stung her on the nose, whereupon she had fainted away with the utmost promptness and elegance. Of course, when Yank arrived, his whole big body a'tremble with anxiety, he found his grandmother quite well, and very busy in the act of cooking a batch of nice, fat doughnuts for him, and, all honor to the young husky, he hugged the old lady, and then ate largely of the doughnuts, which were really very good, and never so much as hinted at the scare she had given him.

He left Balentree the next day, since his liberty was only good for forty-eight hours, and, just as his train was pulling out of Charleston, a big, lumbering, young fellow in civilian clothes sat down beside him. It was Tough Kildare.

"Hullo, Tough!" Yank grunted, none too cordially.

"Hullo, yourself, Yank!" the young giant answered with a grin. "Been in tough luck, ain't you, son?"

Yank flushed, and only nodded assent. He wished that Kildare had chosen some other seat.

"You got a raw deal, kid!" Tough continued sympathetically—and poor Yank brightened up a bit; all the fellows at Camp Ross, even his best friends, had said he'd got exactly what was coming to him.

"Glad somebody thinks so!" he smiled, feeling both grateful, and rather shy.

"Doggone it all, Yank!" from Kildare, with great earnestness, "everybody ought to think so. They treated you like a dog. I heard all about it."

"Y-yes!" Yank assented, eager to show his really bruised, young heart, and badly hurt feelings, to some other fellow. "They—they just wouldn't see things like they really were, Tough. I never meant to make Wardy Brown tumble on top of the General. I was just cuttin' up, like I do all the time, to make the bunch laugh, and I thought I'd give Wardy a little kick, and make him stumble, maybe; but I never thought I'd get him put under arrest under suspicion of hitting an officer. He doubled up his own fool fists, 'cause he got so mad! That wasn't my fault."

And Yank spoke the truth, too. He had only meant to tease and plague Wardy, as usual, but

when the results began to follow each other so fast, he had become scared.

Tough Kildare proved a most delightfully sympathetic listener, the young marine, by the time they had passed Franckonia, feeling that of all the fellows at Camp Ross, he had received the rawest deal. He felt most charmingly sorry for himself, did Yank Hanson!

"Say!" Kildare suddenly interrupted him, "Blamed if it ain't luck, me meetin' you like this. How long you been in Balentree, kid?"

"Since yesterday."

"Well, when you git back to that rat hole of a barracks, you'll find a letter there from a mighty good friend o' yours."

"Who?" Yank demanded, with sudden interest.

"Miss Mary Sawyer," was the response, with a knowing leer added.

The big, young marine blushed, a very shy grin on his mouth.

"Gee!" he gasped. "I—I sure am glad, Tough! Oh, I sure *am* glad! I—I thought my Mary friend would drop me cold since this Brig affair. I know durned well Larry Bluff wrote her all about it. What's she—she want with me? Do you know, Tough?"

"Sure thing! It ain't no secret. She wants

you to come down to her dance at Leadenwallston to-night."

"Aw, Heck!" Yank blurted out in dismay. "Now ain't this just the toughest luck, Kildare? I'll say it is! My liberty expires this evening—this is Friday, you know. Aw, shucks!"

"Aw, be a man, Yank!" Kildare gibed. "Why not French it over to Leadenwallston? Huh?"

"Sa-ay!" a bit belligerently, from the handsome, big boy at his side. "What you think I am? Ain't the Brigadier cut out all Leadenwallston passes for a month, 'cause of that rough-house Whitey Knowles started up a few weeks back? But—Aw, *fellow!* Aw, *Gee!* Aw, wouldn't I love to—to see my Mary friend, an'—an' tell her just how this business 'bout me, an' the General, an' Warfield Brown really stands!"

"An' you oughter tell her, too, kid!" Kildare broke in with aggressive righteousness. "You owe it to a fine girl like Miss Mary. You sure do, I'll say. An' she thinks a heap o' you, kid."

"Honest?" from the enchanted youngster, pink to his ears.

"Sure she does, crazy! Wouldn't of asked you to her dance otherwise, would she? An' she'll sure feel pretty bad at your turnin' her invite down this way. An' *say!* Those passes for Leadenwallston start again to-morrow—I've

been boardin' not so awful far from Camp Ross, out on the Dolittle road, an' I hear a bit, now an' then—and Warfield Brown's got a pass for two days, through Sunday, an' I bet you hats he beats it for Leadenwallston—to show Miss Mary how swell he looks in them new Corporal's chevrons of his!"

A quick, pained, little intake of breath from the big boy at Kildare's side, and Kildare grinned behind his hand.

"If—if I only had some cits—I'd French it—blamed if I wouldn't!" Yank cried, moving his body about the car seat restlessly, the well set up, husky figure of the new Corporal rising with vivid horridness before his eyes. "'Course I wouldn't dare risk it to-night, in these blamed togs, though, 'cause anybody among those old sore-heads in Leadenwallston would call up barracks on the jump, and report me to the M. P. on duty, sure as sin, 'cause you say your own self that those passes for that funny, little burg won't be re-issued 'till to-morrow. Oh, I'd give five bucks for some cits, Tough!"

"Say!" with ponderous good nature, from Kildare. "Tell you what! I'll lend you mine, just for to-night. We're both big enough to use each other's stuff, though you ain't quite such a whale as me."

"Gee!" very eagerly, from Yank. "Will you,

Tough? Will you, honest? Say! that's pretty great of you, old man! I won't forget it in a hurry, you bet! But what'll you do, Tough?"

"Aw, I'll wear that uniform o' yours, just for to-night. We'll meet at the Stag, in Franckonia, at six to-morrow mornin', and change back, and then you can report to barracks on the 9.12 from Charleston."

"But that'll make me twelve hours, or more, late on liberty."

"That's so! Oh, I tell you what! I'm goin' back to Charleston this evenin', an' I might just as well keep along over to Balentree, and send the Captain a wire that your grandmother's a lot worse, an' can't you please stay a bit longer. What's her doctor's name?"

"Frederick Bovey."

"Right enough! I'll send it in his name. Nobody'll never know. 'Course the Captain'll say for you to stay over. Oh, I'll do the best I can for you, kid, 'cause you sure have had one raw deal!"

"Tough, you're a peach!" Yank cried gleefully, his spirit of irrepressible mischief now almost as fully aroused as his desire to see his "Mary friend," before she should behold the gorgeousness of the newest of Corporals. "Where'll we change?"

"That's too easy, kid!" Kildare laughed, and

led the way from the day coach into one of the Pullman's, there taking an empty drawing-room for as far as Savannah, spending the extra money with a prodigality that quite stunned the marine.

After that, with the door once securely locked, it was only a matter of two or three minutes for the boy to strip, and exchange his uniform for Kildare's civilian's clothes.

"Gee, I feel funny in these cits!" he laughed nervously. "Say, Tough! For the love of Mike don't you go and forget my pass. It's in my left breast pocket, buttoned up good."

"Aw, rest easy, kid!" the young giant grinned. "I won't lose it, but it won't be no good to you, 'cause this pass is up this evenin'. Say! You better be durned glad you ain't at Camp Ross to-day! You're in luck. There's a big lot of doin's there, they tell me. 'Bout three hundred Congressmen down there, and the Secretary of the Navy, too, and the General, o'course, an' a sham battle, an' all manner o' didos, an' o'course there'll be a big crowd come along, too! Well, so long! I'll drop off here at Atchison, an' catch the first train I can back to Charleston, an' Balentree. So long, kid! Say! How'd you like them smokes I sent you?"

"When?" very blankly, from Yank Hanson.

"When?" with a laugh. "Well, I like that! Why, when you was in the Brig, kid."

"Aw, Tough!" the boy gulped, his face flushing with gratitude. "Was it you sent me all those smokes, and the extra chow, an' all that? Why, I—I never knew it before. It was—was pretty great of you, Tough! Say! Shake, won't you?"

"Why, sure thing, kid! Put it there! You got a raw deal from them officers at Camp Ross, an' I done all I could for you consequently. They gimme a raw deal, too, you know—an' I ain't forgotten it, neither!"

CHAPTER X

PLAY BALL!

*"O, swallow, swallow, thy first begotten,
The hands that cling, and the feet that follow;
The voice of the child's blood crying yet:
Who hath remembered me? Who hast forgotten?
Thou hast forgotten, O summer swallow,
But the world shall end e'er I forget."*
(—Algernon Charles Swinburne.)

"Yay, Bunny! Yay, you old Bunny-kid! Some three-bagger! Aw, that pitcher's scared to death! *Zowie!* Tol' you so! Tol' you so! Tol' you so! Oh, you catcher! Sa-ay! Wanna nice basket to help catch the ball in, Fats, old boy? Run, Bunny! Run like a big leaguer! Home! Home! *Home!* Aw, golly! Aw, gosh! Aw, *Gee!* Tom! Tommy! Soak 'er one! That's the stuff! That's the stuff, old kid! Hold that Second, Tom! Hold it! *Hold* it! Babe's up! *Whoop-ee!* Blamed if old Tom ain't stole Third! Some shortstop—I don't think! Oh, you Tom! Aw, git outer the way, can't you, Roddy? Think you're made of glass? A two-bagger for Babe!

a perfectly good two-bagger! Cracky! Tom's Home! Ya-ay, *Tom!* Ya-ay, *Tom!* Ya-ay, *Tom!* Aldy's up! Aw, please soak the ball, and keep your mouth shut, or you'll git fresh, and make the Chaplain sore, and lose us the innin'! Aw, Chaplain! That was a *ball*; honest it was, sir! Wake up there, you old Aldy, and for goodness' sake don't get fresh *now*! McManus can't pitch! McManus can't pitch! McManus can't pitch! Huh? *Wha-a-at?* Two *strikes?* Aw, Aldy! Won't you even give Babe a *chance?* Let him git Home, feller! *Please!* Aw, Golly-day! He's ——" and a lot more; cries, yells, whoops, and exhortations from some twenty odd boys, ranging anywhere from ten to fifteen, all sons of officers at Camp Ross, with an equally excited, and very hot Chaplain acting as umpire, hurling jocose railleries at the two "pick-up" nines, playing on the roughest sort of an improvised diamond, over near the Red Cross "hut"—a particularly imposing affair of white concrete, be it added!—and not far from the regular diamond for the marines themselves.

It had been a swelteringly hot Friday, and the crowd of visiting Congressmen, with their wives and friends tagging along, and many extra sight-seers, too, had made the marine barracks at Camp Ross a most uncomfortably confused spot,

with strangers everywhere, so that anything in regulation uniform was being passed along thankfully by the worn out M. P.'s, as a sight refreshing to the eyes, when so many strangers were being halted for passes every minute or two.

There had been a sham battle, but that was over, and now the showers all over the post were running merrily, with young men sky-larking under them, reveling in the cool wash of the fresh water on dusty, sweat-chafed bodies, while a few shadows began to gather most gratefully as the sun got a bit lower on the horizon.

"Look here, you young hyenas!" the Chaplain laughed, mopping his face energetically. "That closes the innin', and I'm blamed if I hold off my shower another minute! You kids deserved this game, for you've had to keep in the background all day, but I refuse to serve the extra innin'. You've played out the nine, all right, and it's a tie score, thanks to Bunny and Tom. Too bad Aldy wouldn't let you have a chance to get Home, Babe! Tough luck! Now it's no use mobbing me, you young scamps! I've simply got to get a shower, and get dressed. I'm in for the dinner the Brigadier's giving the General this evening. Also, it's the supper time for the last one of you children. Here, catch this ball, Bunny Brigadier, Junior, and keep it for next time," and the Chap-

lain sent a ball with such biting swiftness to Bunny, that that young gentleman let it slip through his fingers with a whistle, and it sailed right past the Red Cross hut, rolling out of sight down the steep bank of the Big Bear river.

"Oh, you butterfingers!" came a general yell. "You let it through, so you chase it, Bunny!"

"Sure I'll chase it!" the Brigadier's boy grunted. "It's prob'ly rolled down onto that little stretch of pebbly beach yonder. Say, Tom! You take Mack," pointing to the Airedale, "and keep him up home with you, won't you? An' 'phone Daddy from your quarters that I'll be right on up in about ten minutes. I'll get billy-blue-hill if I'm late to-night, 'cause I'm to bathe and get all dressed up for chow. So long! Go 'long with Tom, Mack! Beat it! I'll get that old ball in a jiff, fellers!" and the Brigadier's boy, his blouse rather dirty from hard play, his corduroy knickers, his bare knees, his rolled-down stockings, and his "scuffed" shoes, all pleasantly dusty, raced over to the side of the Red Cross hut, between it and a single set of log cabin quarters, his funny cap, with its sharply peaked vizor pushed high off his hot forehead, on the back of his dusty-brown head, the famous Chinese Muesette, which he had set on the steps of the hut during the game, now held in one hand, swinging easily with the motion of one slim, bare arm.

Bunny reconnoitered a bit, for the bank was about forty feet high, and in most places almost a sheer drop to the tiny stretch of beach, but the youngster knew the lay of the land well, and so trotted easily on his slim legs, past the farther side of the log cabin, away from the Red Cross hut, in a sort of tumbling slide that would have broken the neck of anything less than a small boy. He reached the beach, and, as his heels struck on the gravel, he screamed, but in a very muffled sort of way, for a big hand had been clapped directly over his mouth, the hard palm pressing his lips tightly, while the mate to this efficient hand inserted certain of its long fingers between his skin, and the soft collar of his shirt, and pulled him back roughly, until he pressed, panting and struggling desperately, against the olive drab of a marine's uniform. A second more, and he was released, but only to gaze into the barrel of a Colt.

The Brigadier's boy turned very white, so that each one of his few, cheerful freckles stood out with pathetic clearness, while big drops of sweat began to tumble off his face and neck, one after another. He felt sick, and, for the very first time in his life, very little. He wanted to cry, but he was too entirely his Dad's son to let himself do it if it could possibly be helped.

"If you let out one yap, just one, little yap, kid," said the young giant who now faced him, "I'll blow a hole in your little head. I mean it. Now, do just what I tell you. Will you?"

"Y-yes!"

"Say 'Yes, sir', kid—even if you are a General's son, an' I'm toggged up as an enlisted man."

"Y-yes, sir! Aw, Tough Kildare! What you want to do with me?"

"Oh, you know me, do you?"

"Y-yes!"

"*Huh?*"

"Y-yes, sir!"

"Strip—an' do it durned quick!"

The Brigadier's boy stripped, but his stubby, brown fingers seemed woefully clumsy, even to himself, as he undressed, for the gun had been lowered on a line with his quickly rising and falling stomach, and remained in that position.

"Now put on them white swimmin' trunks there. That's it! Tie 'em 'round your waist with that drawstring. Now look alive, kid! Pull that little beached canoe out into the river. You're strong enough, I guess. You better be, anyways. Now put your clothes on board. Say! put that funny lookin', bamboo thing, with the brass bell, in, too! Right you are. Can you paddle? We'll be a'goin' down stream."

"Y-yes, Kildare!"

A quick, heavy cuff on the side of the dusty-brown head that sent the lean, young body sprawling.

"Don' you call my name, you little fool! Just you say 'sir'."

The Brigadier's boy picked himself up, his soft lips twitching to keep back the flood of tears that now showed plainly enough in his eyes; eyes big, and round, and scared, and yet brave, too, in their manly attempt at self-control, poor, wretched, little twelve-year-old!

"Y-yes, sir!" he choked, wiping a fleck of blood off his mouth with the back of one hand.

"Git in, then!"

"Y-yes, sir!"

"Now hold her close in shore. That's the stuff! Gimme them underclothes you took off. That's it! See, kid? I'm chuckin' 'em in on the beach, in a nice pile, 'long with your little pants, an' your shirt, an' your cap; an' there's your shoes an' stockin's, an' garters, too. See? Understand it all, kid?"

"N-no, sir!" the young voice hopeless in the extreme.

"Why, you went in a'swimmin', it was so hot. An' you stripped off your clothes, an' left 'em on the beach, an' you got drowned. That's what they'll think of, first thing, up at the barracks.

But you won't drown; not you, kid! Oh my, no! Now paddle like blue blazes, but sort of hug the shore, under the bank. That hospital crowd'll never notice us, an' if they do there's nothin' funny in a kid in swimmin' trunks, an' a marine out paddlin' on the Big Bear. An' if you try to holler as we go by there, I'll kill you right off. I'll shoot you at once, 'stead of—"

"'Stead of what, Kil—sir, I mean?"

"'Stead of knockin' you in the head after I git you safe to my cabin down river, so's I kin make my getaway. Then, after a while, when they do find it—you I mean, kid—they'll know it's just a back payment to the Brigadier from Tough Kildare, for his dishonorable discharge from the Corps—only I'll be in Mexico by then, with a buddy o' mine."

A hard shiver ran over the slight, naked body of the boy in the canoe; a faint, strangled sob broke from him, and that was all, for he controlled himself with the desperation of fear, his face a little bowed toward his bare knees, for Kildare had again grabbed his gun.

After that, the young eyes big and hopeless, watching the familiar river bank slip so quickly past, the boy paddled hard, the muscles in the lean, little body, under the firm whiteness of the skin, working, working, working; the lips, with

a few fresh flecks of blood on them from Kildare's blow, held close together in spite of their piteous trembling, but, do what he could, big tears at last began to tumble down the inquisitive, wide-awake, young face, with its pert, utterly friendly, short nose, with its few cheerful freckles. The Brigadier's boy was crying.

CHAPTER XI

OUR CHIEF

*"The King is come to marshal us, in all his armor
drest,
And he has bound a snow-white plume upon his
gallant crest.
He looked upon his people, and a tear was in
his eye;
He looked upon the traitors, and his glance was
stern and high.
Right graciously he smiled on us, as rolled from
wing to wing,
Down all our line, a deafening shout, 'God save
our Lord the King!'"*

(—Thomas, Lord Macaulay.)

A perfect shout of laughter rolled most joyously over the soft hills from the Brigadier's wide tea-porch, for the General—the Chief—had just finished one of his deliciously humorous stories, stories that always held such a lot of this grizzled officer's almost uncanny grasp of human nature, and made charming through the innate kindness of the man, below whatever of brusqueness he saw fit to show in his official relations.

The General was in one of his most spontaneous humors, and was making himself quite entirely charming to the group of officers on the porch, all of whom had accepted most gladly the post commandant's invitation for a pleasant dinner, following a most harassing day. Now, with all the august members from the House, and the Senate, safe on their way back to Charleston, a gentle peace filled the hearts of these men, a peace quite thoroughly in tune with the beatific tranquillity of the wide stretch of the valley of the Big Bear, out-rolling at their feet, just beginning to receive the gracious, cooling influence of a light, little breeze that had sprung up as the sun began to slip behind the oak-wooded hills of Camp Ross.

Cigars, very, very good cigars, were in order, along with all manner of physical and intellectual contentment, with the surety of an excellent dinner within the next half hour, and, with the General in his present humor, a host of good stories sure to be forthcoming.

The Brigadier alone of all this uniformed gathering, appeared just a bit fidgety. At last he spoke:

"Look here, General!" he began, turning directly to his chief. "You have brought up a boy to man's estate, and placed him just where a boy

belongs—in the Corps—so tell me: What would you do with a disobedient, little shaver who was told to report for duty at six, and who, at six forty-five, had failed to put in an appearance?"

The General burst out laughing.

"Under ordinary circumstances I'd confine him to barracks," he chuckled, "*but*," with energetic emphasis, "if you mean my friend Bunny by your disrespectful term 'a disobedient, little shaver', I'd box his ears, and then give him the best catcher's glove to be had for love or money. He told me himself, he wanted one like a 'big leaguer'. I'd make the ear boxing of the lightest, and the glove of the heaviest. How about it, Colonel?"—to the stout Adjutant.

"Approved!" with a wide grin, from Lieutenant Colonel McArthur, who adored Bunny almost as much as the General himself, "only I recommend the omission of that box on the ear, sir. The catcher's glove is quite in order, though."

"Say!" from the Brigadier, laughing, too, and openly pleased at the affection with which his small boy was held, "I wish *you* had to bring up a piece of twelve-year-old lightening of your own, Colonel! It's funny about Bunny, though! Mighty funny! Come to think of it, General, I believe this is the very first time in his life that the little chap has deliberately disobeyed me."

"Well!" the General flung back cheerfully, taking up the cudgels for his absent, small chum at once, "so far as that goes, my dear man, Bunny may not be deliberately disobeying you even now. Give him the benefit of the doubt. '*Maxima reverentia debetur pueris*,' you know. Eh, Chaplain? Oh, by-the-way! that reminds me! Have any of you read that screamingly funny boys' story in—" but a rush of feet stopped him, and, a second later, the scared, white face of young Corliss appeared, followed by Chet Hume, old Sergeant Bowker, and a Sergeant of the M. P.'s.

The officers on the porch jumped from their rattan chairs.

"*Now* what?" the General demanded sharply, while the Brigadier checked young Corliss' impetuous entrance into a post commandant's quarters, with a cold eye.

Corliss saluted. Everybody saluted.

"Oh, sir!" the young M. P. began, something mighty close to a sob in his voice, "I—I dropped down river to take Lieutenant Hume's canoe from the concrete pier to that bit of beach below the Red Cross hut, and—and—and—aw, God! I found your boy's clothes, underclothes an' all, piled up on the pebbles, but I saw nothin' of the little chap himself, sir. Then—then I noticed these few pebbles—just this handful I brought

along, sir—and there's a bit of blood on a couple of 'em. An' I—I called Bunny—your boy, sir—I called him 'till I went 'most crazy with the—the horror of it—it's so awful still down there on the river—but I only got my own voice back from the other shore. He must have gone in for a swim, and—and—and he's the finest, straightest, little kid in the Corps, and—"

The Brigadier, his lean face like death, had dropped into a chair, his head in his hands, while a clamor arose from his brother officers. Then came the voice of the General—cool, decisive, hard, though his face, too, was quite ashy.

"McArthur, I'll want you! Sergeant Bowker, I'll want *you*; we've worked shoulder to shoulder before this in our time, old soldier! Hume, I may want you!" and then, with startling swiftness his voice took on the wonderful gentleness of a man's sympathy for another man, "Of course you, too, most of all, Brigadier!" then, resuming his cold tone, "Major Pokey, better return at once to the Administration Building and open up the Post Commandant's office, and stand by for 'phone calls. Sergeant!" to the Sergeant of the marine police. "Use the Post Commandant's 'phone, here in the quarters. Call Dr. Shannon, and Dr. Treaves, both, and tell them to meet me at the Red Cross hut, at once. Explain matters to

them, of course. And tell them it's my orders. Then call up your own barracks and throw every available M. P. at the post over to the hut. Come, gentlemen! Let's go! The Brigadier's machine is outside, and so is the Adjutant's."

Not once in the issuing of these varied orders had there been a moment of hesitation. Not once had the hard voice been raised. Only the deadly whiteness of the set face showed the real anguish of the man who, next to the Brigadier himself, most honestly loved the Brigadier's boy.

"No, Colonel, I'll drive myself, thanks!" came the voice of the Post Commandant, himself entirely collected now, though a look like death itself burned in his eyes. "All right back there? Good!" and the big touring car shot down hill at a speed that left the astounded M. P. on duty near the depot, quite dumbfounded, and nearly ran over that newest of Non. Coms., Corporal Warfield Brown.

"Sa-ay!" in wrathful indignation, from that young husky, apostrophizing the fast vanishing car. "What's the idea?" and then, *zipp!* and another car, going just as rushingly, almost grazed his leggings.

At the same moment, Wardy was standing at the marine news-stand, near the railroad station, four M. P.'s, revolvers held ready in grimly

clenched, brown fists, flung past him on the run, but a fifth, being rather fat, slowed up.

"Say! What's it all about?" Wardy demanded, realizing now that something serious was in order, and the marine part of him responding at once.

"Drowned! Killed! Blood smeared on the rocks!" the stout M. P. yelled, resuming his run immediately.

"*Who*, you big lummo?" from Corporal Brown, in agitated indignation.

"Bunny! The Brigadier's little chap! Back of the Red Cross hut!" and the M. P., spying at that moment a motor-cycle, at once commandeered it, and sped across the railroad tracks, and up the main street of Camp Ross, taking a daring short-cut up a bank, through the side yard of an enraged citizen, and so across the roughness of the new parade ground, for the Red Cross hut.

"What'd that guy say?" demanded the marine on duty in the news-stand.

Wardy told him with a gulp.

"Gosh!" very weakly, from the marine.

Warfield glowered in upon the man at the news-stand, a strange, harsh look settling on his sun-browned, young face, a sick gray-white showing below his tan.

"*Say!*" he growled, more animal, and less boy

than he had ever been before, even in his own peculiarly pugnacious, truculent, young life. "You think our kid's drowned, do you? I don't! I can't! An' that blood on the rocks, the M. P. told us about! Anyhow, our kid swims like a young fish! You listen here, Smith! Tough Kildare's in this! How'd I know? I don't know—I—I just *feel* it, man. I feel it all over—and—and I'll run him down if I die for it. He's put his big, filthy hands on our Brigadier's boy, has he?—Maybe he's hurt him!" with a big, savage sob—"Well, I'll find him! I'll find him—and I'll kill him for it—*Gee*, how I'll kill him!"

CHAPTER XII

THE JACKAL'S LAIR

*"Lightly answered the Colonel's son: 'Do good
to bird and beast,
But count who come for the broken meats, be-
fore thou makest a feast,
If there should follow a thousand swords to
carry my bones away,
Belike the price of a jackal's meal were more
than a thief could pay.
They will feed their horse on the standing crop,
their men on the garnered grain,
The thatch of the byres will serve their fires
when all the cattle are slain.
But if thou thinkest the price be fair—thy breth-
ren wait to sup,
The hound is kin to the jackal spawn—howl,
dog, and call them up!'"*
(—Rudyard Kipling.)

Yank Hanson was about as mad as any marine of whom the Corps could boast!

It was about seven o'clock on the same fateful Friday afternoon on which the Brigadier's boy had been kidnapped, and Yank, pink to his ears

and greatly troubled as to his mind, and with murder in his heart, was pacing up and down the platform of the railroad station, at Leadenwallston, waiting for the seven-five train.

He had arrived in the quaint, little South Carolina town only a short time before, and, in spite of an uncomfortable knowledge that his borrowed clothes were too big for him (except for the low shoes, which were too small), he had at once rushed for the house of his "Mary friend." But, oh, what a reception awaited him! At first the young lady refused to see him at all, but, later, she condescended to do so, and swept in upon the big, good looking youth with all the violence peculiar to her sixteen years.

Indeed she had *not* written any invitation to him! Of course not! Such an idea was, in itself, an impertinence under the circumstances! Boys who had been locked up in the Brig for two weeks were not of the type with which she cared to be seen—not for a moment! especially when they had been trying to get other boys—*nice* boys—into trouble! Furthermore, what did he mean by sneaking off to Leadenwallston in citizen's clothes? If he didn't leave the house *at once*, she would call her father, and notify the Barracks authorities over long distance, too. And she would—this last stab went home with the most

awful jolt of all—she would most certainly talk it all over with Wardy Brown—*Corporal Warfield Brown*—to-morrow, for he was coming to spend two days at her house, as the guest of her brother, Jim Sawyer.

Poor Yank slunk from the house as forlornly as an ill-treated puppy-dog, terribly hurt at the unkindness of his "Mary friend," more resentful than ever, of course, in regard to the tow-headed Warfield, and raging inwardly at the practical joke of Tough Kildare. .

Why had Tough played such a mean trick on him, anyway? And how on earth—here he began to perspire freely—could he get back his uniform? Probably Tough would not be at Franckonia in the morning, as he had promised, and, of course, he hadn't really sent that telegram to the Captain to extend Yank's liberty. Oh, yes! Yank Hanson was in a mess, a serious mess, and he fully realized the horror of practical jokes for the first time in his life, poor chap!

Walking away from the agent's window, having bought his ticket for Franckonia on the faint hope that Kildare might meet him at six the next morning as he had promised, Yank very nearly collided with two marine officers, both Lieutenants, and both so excited that he was in no danger of recognition, though, not knowing that, his

heart seemed to turn two or three somersaults within his breast, as he stepped behind the door angle.

"You *bet* I'm going back!" one of the officers declared vehemently. "Why, great Scott, Maltby! it'll just about kill the Brigadier if that boy is dead! It'll hurt every man jack of us at the post, too. All of us are pretty fond of Bunny!"

"You bet we are!" from the other. "I'm going back, too, Stern—as fast as the seven-five can carry me! Got the news over long distance, from Sally Pokey. She says the Major's all broken up, like everybody else in Barracks. That's a fine, little chap of the Brigadier's. The General's on hand, thank goodness! He's such a wonder in an emergency! There seems to be some doubt about the boy's being drowned, on account of a few pebbles that M. P. found on the beach, smeared with blood."

"You mean there's a chance of some dirty work?" with a gasp, from Lieutenant Stern. "Good God, Maltby! Who could be beast enough to—to hurt a happy, dear, little chap like the Brigadier's kid?"

"Well!" lowering his voice, "there's Tough Kildare, you know! He's brute enough to do anything, I guess, and he said he'd get even with

the Brigadier for that dishonorable discharge. Gosh! Wouldn't I like to shoot him down, like the cur he is!"

"But see here, Maltby!" the other officer expostulated. "At least half the barracks know Kildare by sight. And, anyhow, nobody in civilian clothes would be allowed to be snooping about. If he was still in the Corps, now, and had his uniform, that would be different."

The train from Savannah thundered in at this moment, and brought the talk to an end, and the two officers, hurrying out to board it, were too much occupied to notice the face of the tall, young fellow of nineteen, who swung on just before them, a face gray-white, and so stricken with horror as to crush out every vestige of its usually boyish joyousness. All thought of Franckonia was now forgotten.

Arrived at Camp Ross, with the summer dusk now fast gathering, Yank, in his civilian clothes, headed at once to the place of a man, near the depot, who had machines for hire. He had exactly ten dollars left, and this he gave the man for the loan of a small car for an hour, which he was to drive himself. That done, with set face, and fast beating heart, the young marine sent the car going as rapidly as he dared for the old Dolittle road, for Kildare had told him on the

train that he had been boarding "somewhere on the Dolittle road," and this was the only chance he could think of of learning anything of the young giant's whereabouts.

The first place at which he stopped was a tiny negro cabin, and, jumping out of the car, he ran up to the open door, at which sat a small, evil-faced, old woman, almost blind.

"Wha' you wants, marster?" she demanded, with a disagreeable sort of servile politeness.

"Say! You know Kildare—Tough Kildare?" the boy growled, a look very like murder in his young eyes.

"I does *not*!" very promptly, from the old negress, but a look of fear had crossed her face for just a second, and Yank had noticed it.

"You know these clothes, I bet, don't you, mammy?" he said, more gently. "Feel 'em! That's it! Well, they're Kildare's, ain't they? You know they are, all right! Oh, I know Kildare! He—he used to send me cigarettes and stuff when I was locked up in the Brig, at Quantico. I'm a tough guy, too, mammy! Well, Kildare's in trouble, an', an' I'm going to—to find him. He lent me this suit—I'm a marine myself—and he's got on my uniform, you see—and it'll be pretty hard for him to make a getaway in a marine's uniform, you know. I've got to get

these cits back to him, mammy, an' just as quick as I can, too! Where'll I find him?"

The old woman rose at once to her feet. The feel of Kildare's clothing had convinced her. She seemed much excited.

"You better go by de ribber, suh!" she cried. "Hit B'ar creek an' push down et as pert as you kin, honey, 'twill you gits ter de ribber. My son Jim's got a boat on de creek, an' you jes' follow dis heah paf' an' you'll fin' et. Marse Tough, he went down dyar in de canoe. Ef he's in trubble we's got ter holp 'im. W'en you gits ter de ribber, jes' you drap on down et, past de horspital at Camp Ross, an' in 'bout ten minutes you'll come ter a place whar five pow'ful big white oaks is, all de same size 'most, an' standin' on de bank wid er white grabble beach below 'em. Dat'll be 'bout half way 'tween Camp Ross an' Tide Water. Well, suh, you git out'n yo' boat dyar, an' foller a blazed trail, marked out wif moughty leetle hatchet cuts, 'way down on de trees. Dyar ain't no paf' 'twill you git on 'bout half er mile or so f'om de ribber, an' den et's er red clay paf', pow'ful dusty jes' now, so my Jim says. Reckon my boy'll take yo' cyar back ter Barricks suh—an' Mars Tough'll pay 'im good, I bet!"

Yank Hanson thanked her, and then, with a

great wave of relief, set out for Bear creek, going 'cross country, more or less, over a tiny path the old negress had pointed out. He found the boat, not a row-boat, but, to his delight, a dilapidated motor-boat, or at least a skiff into which a motor had been put, and, getting into this at once, he pushed off, and headed her roughly shaped nose down stream, wholly unarmed, save for his own lusty boyhood, but rejoicing that he was, at last, on the trail of Tough Kildare.

By the time he threw over the tiny wheel, and sent his boat into the wide stretch of the river, it had become dark, but a big, full moon was beginning to peep over the pines and oaks above him, and, after a while—ages upon ages it seemed to the marine—the silvered, peaceful light picked out easily the dark, majestic outlines of five giant oaks, all nearly of one size, standing quietly on the southern side of the river, the shore of which Yank's boat was hugging closely. Then he saw, in the shadows, the little bit of white, pebbly beach of which the old negress had told him, and for this he headed immediately.

On land things were not so easy, for the blazed trail was hard to follow, the notches being very, very tiny, and far apart. Also, Yank's borrowed shoes hurt him terribly, and at last, with a grunt of disgust, he sat down and took them, and his

socks, too, off, and so kept on, barefooted, the red clay dust—he had found the path now—spurting up from between the toes of his big feet, their peculiarly large tracks left plainly on its soft surface.

Once he thought he heard a scream, but it was nothing but a screech-owl, and Yank, after contenting himself that it was so, leant his hot, working face against a pine, and sobbed out inarticulate, but very honest, thanks to his God. Then he resumed his swinging trot along the path, the stones cutting his bare feet, wild blackberry bushes scratching his naked legs, his face constantly whipped by some low, overhanging bow, but keeping on doggedly—wholly unarmed, but wholly unafraid. In spite of his love for mischief, in spite of his rough pranks, the big, handsome boy was a marine—and never so fully a marine as at this moment; fighting onward, onward, onward, to what end he did not know, nor care, so long as he could save something clean, and weak, and oppressed, from something filthy, and powerful, and bullying. As never before was this boy's heart in tune with the all-chivalrous Corps to which he belonged.

Then, quite suddenly, he broke into a clearing—a big clearing among big pines, at one side of which stood a two-room, log cabin, and before

which, in the moonlight, stood Kildare, leaning against the door jam, and looking down evilly at the lean, sturdy, little figure of a boy, naked save for an old, ragged pair of white swimming trunks. They were talking, these two, or at least the boy was talking, and Yank, controlling a desire to spring on Kildare at once, listened, a big lump in his throat, to the youngster's voice—high, and frightened, and yet to the point in what he said, too—his father's son to the end.

"When you k-kill me," the Brigadier's boy said, speaking a little breathlessly, for his breath was coming in quick, frightened, little pants from between his cut lips, "When you k-kill me, they'll find me—Oh, yes! they'll find me, Kildare!" the boyish voice sweeping higher, "They'll *find* me, Kildare—the Marines'll find me—the United States Marines'll *find* me—*my* Marines!—an'—an' they'll t-take me home to daddy—my daddy—even if I'm dead—'cause a dead boy loves his daddy just as good as a live boy, I bet!—an'—an' they'll get you, Kildare! They'll get you no matter where you go, or where you hide! They'll hunt you out, Kildare! They're *Marines*, you know! An'—an' they won't forget the—the cut on my mouth, where you struck me, Kildare!—'cause if—if they do only see it on—on a dead boy—it'll still be their Brigadier's boy, all the same,

an'—an' they'll pay you back for it all, Tough Kildare—the Marines'll pay you back for it all—*my* Marines! Scared? 'Course I'm s-scared—I'm awful scared—but—but—," then with a scream—"Daddy!"—for Kildare had grabbed him, and was dragging the small, supple body, struggling and fighting with the instinct of any little he-animal, for the life, the joyous, boyish life God had given him.

And then—Yank Hanson ran across the clearing, with the shout of some boy angel militant, and Kildare, dropping the little body he had been dragging about, whipped out his gun, and fired, and Yank, mischievous, sky-larking, prankish Yank, threw both arms high above his brown head, and pitched forward on his face.

CHAPTER XIII

"SEMPER FIDELIS"

*"Down by the head an' sinkin'; her fires are
drawn and cold,
And the water's splashin' hollow, on the skin of
the empty hold—
Churnin', an' choppin', an' chucklin', quiet, an'
scummy, an' dark—
Full to the lower hatches, and risin' steady.
Hark!
That was the after bulkhead . . . She's flooded
from stem to stern . . .
Never seen death yet, Dickie? . . . Well, now
is your time to learn."*

(—Rudyard Kipling.)

The same moon that had helped poor Yank Hanson to follow the blazed trail to Kildare's cabin also helped to keep company for two olive green clad figures standing silently on the little strip of beach below the Red Cross hut, at Camp Ross, the only two remaining now of the many uniformed men who had hurried there at the order of their General a short time before. That officer, every inch a detail man, had also issued

orders for both the submarine chaser, lying at her berth by the new concrete pier, and her launch, too, to patrol the river about the beach, while her cutters, manned by eager-faced "jackies", swung close along the shore, hunting, hunting for the something they so dreaded to find, though the General, in his own heart, felt that the chances of Bunny being drowned were far from likely, and that a yet more horrible fate was in store for the boy—the fate of being in the hands of Tough Kildare. Therefore he was throwing out his men in searching parties, besides wiring broadcast to Savannah, Atlanta, New Orleans, Washington, and Charleston.

Of the actual clues, however, there were none so far, only the few pebbles that the M. P. had found, with the blood on them, close to the pile of boy's clothes, and both the men left on duty now, both marines, felt an inert helplessness that was lots harder to stand than any amount of fighting would have been. These two were young Corliss, and Corporal Warfield Brown, the former on duty by order, the latter because he had begged to be allowed to stay. Each had a revolver in his holster.

They had been standing, very quiet, these two boys, for many minutes when they heard the muffled chugging of a motor boat, and at once

they were on the alert, glad of anything that might mean doing instead of waiting.

“Think it’s somethin’ from that sub-chaser, Wardy?” the M. P. whispered.

“ ’Course not, Corliss!” the youthful Corporal growled back. “It’s a motor boat, an’ she’s got a mighty bum engine, too. Hear her cylinders miss? I’m going to get into that canoe of Lieutenant Chet’s, and paddle out, and hail that guy, whoever he is,” and not waiting for the M. P. to answer, he pushed off the tiny canoe and dug the paddle into the river, just as the motor boat, with Yank Hanson on board, foamed by, headed, as we know, for the five big oaks further down the Big Bear River.

Wardy hailed him, all right, but the only result was that Yank, bent on the pursuit of Kildare, and knowing that if this uniformed man in the canoe—maybe an M. P.—stopped him, and recognized him as a fellow marine, dressed in citizen’s clothes, he would be sure to put him under arrest, merely sent his boat ahead at increased speed, ducking low as the indignant Corporal emptied his revolver after him.

Wardy, in spite of his gusty temper, was a practical young soul, especially where anything in relation to his duty as a marine was concerned, so he very methodically reloaded his gun before

he set out after the delinquent motor boat, but when he did at last start after it, he went at break-neck speed, somewhat to the indignation of Corliss, M. P., left, a solitary patrol, on the beach.

Needless to say, Wardy had no chance of keeping up with Yank's craft, crazy though it was, for a motor can beat a boy's muscles any day going, so in little or no time the marine in the canoe was simply following the general direction of the motor boat on chance, keeping close to the shore in a sort of desperate "follow-my-leader" game.

Great, then, was Warfield's joy when, in the moonlight that now flooded the beautiful, gracious breadth of the old river, he saw the hull of the motor boat, her nose grounded on a bit of beach, and for this beach he headed at once, feeling that the fact that the man in the boat had preferred to take a chance of being shot rather than stopping when so ordered, argued ill for the man's character. Maybe—the stout, little marine's heart bounded with a grim joy at the thought!—maybe it was Tough Kildare himself!

Wardy, in the old days to which Dr. Iron had referred, once upon a time, when he was still in knickers, and was helping the United States Public Health Service in their anti-malaria campaign

in South Carolina, during war times, had been a boy scout; patrol leader of the “Sea Gulls”. His work in woodcraft, and as a pathfinder, had been exceptionally good, and now this partially forgotten ability stood him in good stead, for his quick, practical, young eyes, with the aid of the moonbeams that sifted through the myriad leaves, picked out the notches on the trees with far more ease than had been the case with Yank Hanson, who, in consequence of his slower progress, was not more than half a mile ahead of him.

Once arrived at the red clay path, Wardy stopped, for the blazed trail ceased here. He scratched his close cropped, fluffy, tow head solemnly, this being his favorite method of seeking inspiration, and then took from one of his pockets what, next to his Corporal’s chevrons, he considered his dearest possession—his old scout knife, the gift of his particular chum, Billy Hoover, patrol leader of the “Bulldogs”, three or four years before. In this most useful implement was set, of course, a tiny compass, and Wardy, the knife balanced in the warm palm of one hand, struck a match and looked at the trembling, little needle carefully, with the result that he scratched his head again, more earnestly than before, for, unlike the impetuous Yank, he wanted to know about where he was going, and, to his surprise,

the path, which began where the trail stopped, headed back toward the river.

Wardy grunted. Then he dropped to his haunches, and examined the path as well as he could, using many a match thereon, but to some purpose, for when he again got to his legs, his good-looking, round face was the personification of horror. Wardy had discovered two things. One, the imprint of the ball, and the toes, of a small, naked foot—a boy's foot, and the other, showing plainly in the red clay dust, print after print of the bare feet of a man, feet startlingly big, too—and Kildare, in spite of his great size, had rather small feet. In size they rather suggested a negro's feet, but they were much too well shaped for that.

Wardy grunted once more, again scratched his head, and then gasped:

"Aw, Golly!" he shivered, dismay writ large on his sun-browed countenance, "*Lookit!* There isn't a fellow anywhere 'round barracks with footsies as big as those, 'cept Yank Hanson. Aw, Gosh! I always knew that guy was the freshest thing in a uniform, but—but I never dreamt he was bad—sure 'nough bad! He's done this, has he, just 'cause that poor, spunky, little kid told on him the time he kicked me on the steps of the gym., and tried to get me in

Dutch with the General? He must be crazy, like Larry Bluff said.”

Really horrified at this cold-blooded side of his brother marine, which, in spite of his dislike, he had never suspected, the stout, young Corporal began to move forward along the path, his revolver gripped most purposefully in one hand. Then he heard a scream—Bunny’s scream—and a shot—Kildare’s shot—and then he broke into a run, sweat breaking out all over him, scared and tortured with the thoughts that began to follow one another, with a rush, through his brain. He was running headlong now, careless of the noise his heavy body made as it crashed through the undergrowth on either side of the narrow path, and careless, too, in his horror (for the boy’s scream rang clear in his ears, and tore at his breast), of his footing, so that when the toe of one shoe caught in a vine, it threw him, sending his gun into a thicket of briar. It might take an hour to find it, in its blackly dense hiding-place, and Warfield had no hour to spare. In his pounding heart, in his quickly working brain, ran, subconsciously, like a piece of glorified routine, the mighty words of his Corps—“Semper Fidelis!”—and to this ideal he would be true to the last drop of warm blood in him, to the last tough, straining, young muscle.

They told him afterwards that he yelled it, shouted it, but whether that be so, certainly his heart rang with it as he crashed into the clearing, just as Kildare had looked up quickly, from where he knelt by the limp, huddled body of the marine he had shot, beginning to strip the boy, and thankful to have his civilian clothes back,—
"*Semper Fidelis.*"

Like the fearless, pugnacious, little bulldog that he was, Warfield simply flung the husky weight of his five feet-eight inches of solid muscle upon the lumbering hugeness of Kildare's six feet-two, fighting, tearing, striking when he could, while Kildare, cursing him, stumbled about, trying to get his balance, and the use of his gun, blood from a blow the young Corporal had given him in the face, partially blinding him.

The fight (a furious, little wildcat and clumsy bear could not have torn more savagely at each other), could not last long, for Kildare's great strength was far ahead of Wardy's, and it was purely a question of strength in the long run.

Kildare could not break the boy's clinging body from him, try as he might, but he dragged the marine here and there as if he had been a baby, and, freeing one hand, reached his gun.

Bunny, crouched, helpless to help, but utterly on the alert, yelled a warning to the Corporal,

and Wardy, reminded by the boy's cry that not only his own life, but the life of his Brigadier's boy, too, depended on him, clung to the giant's arm desperately, savagely, while Kildare, worrying and straining the boy's tough muscles as a bull might a set of rags, stumbled closer and closer to a thin line of pines that marked the drop from the clearing to the river, some forty odd feet below.

“Oh, Wardy!” from the Brigadier's boy.
 “He'll get you over that drop! Oh, *Wardy!*”

Then, for surely “the Lord is mindful of His own,” a strange thing happened, for, as the two swaying bodies, both the man's and the strong boy's, panting in a labored agony now, strained the hard muscles under their sweating skins close to each other, fighting, struggling, stumbling, Kildare wrenching to get his arm free, and the marine clinging to it with all the fast ebbing strength of him, his boy's endurance at last beginning to lose ground before the superior strength of a grown man, Kildare's foot struck some small object—a narrow, reedlike thing of bamboo, with a brass bell at one end, and his ankle turned on it, and he tottered for a few seconds, clutching his great fingers together instinctively, to save himself, and—

A report from his revolver, a spurt of ugly

flame, a rush of blood that, for a moment, blinded the stout, little marine, and then Kildare's merciless grip slackened, and he sank, rather slowly, to his knees, shot by his own gun, the bullet, in the queer course that a bullet sometimes takes, cutting deep into the bull-like neck, close to where Wardy's desperately set face had been pressed against it, and cutting the artery whose blood had so blinded the marine.

And that last shot, and that warning scream from Bunny, and the involuntary yell from the young marine as he stumbled backward, wiping the other man's blood from his face with one bare arm, were heard from the river close by, for a shout, a great shout, answered it, and then the rays of a searchlight from the deck of the submarine chaser began to fling themselves between the spaces of the pines, hunting, hunting, hunting for a meaning to it all, an answer to it all. Then running feet from another direction, along the red clay path, and the General, and the Brigadier, and Chet, and M. P.'s, many M. P.'s, bursting into the clearing, some stumbling over the body of Yank Hanson, still lying in a dusty, limp heap where he had fallen, but all gazing at just one thing—at a small, nearly naked figure, with a somewhat freckled face still very white, but, boylike, enriched by a most rapturous, though

openly tearful, grin, as it pressed down close to the uniform of a slim, badly shaken, Brigadier.

The General, with his favorite, old Sergeant at his heels, both with their side arms clear, sprang up to Kildare, young Corliss close behind them, and equally ready.

“Huh!” the General growled, after one look, “I ought to shoot you right here, man, but of course I can’t. You’ll probably die, but if not, the law must work out its slow course.”

“An’ th’ divil av a pity ut is, sor!” from Sergeant Bowker, “for a dog’s not fit for th’ chair. But, as ye say, sor, ut must be turned over to th’ civil authorities, for w’ich purpose, by your leave, I’ll give ut th’ first aid I grudge ut. An’—an’—”—What? Yes, the Hard Boiled Egg was blushing, blushing as Wardy might have done—“ef ye’ll jest be havin’ some av th’ men stand betwane me an’—an’ th’ Brigadier, I’ll be after doin’ me wor-rk th’ bether—for—for—” and the old fellow gulped, while the General, not trusting himself to glance again at this father and son, grunted assent, swore softly at his own weakness, and passed one sleeve rather awkwardly across his eyes.

Then he strode directly up to Wardy, who was still leaning very wearily against a tree, one bare arm resting against its cool bark, his hot, blood-

smeared face sunk into its firm skin—too tired, too utterly tired, and shaken, to move.

"Corliss reported that you chased a motor boat in Hume's canoe, and that the boat refused to stop for you," the General said. "So of course we followed you in the sub-chaser, found both your canoe and the other boat, and then stumbled through to the rest. Are you hurt, Brown?"

The stout, little marine pulled his aching, bruised body to attention, and tried to salute, but the arm muscles refused to act, so he only managed a shy, tired, little grin.

"No, sir!" he said.

"I'm not so sure of that," the General smiled, one of the gentle, understanding smiles he had for his good marines, and that fell on them in the rare instances that they were given, like an accolade, "Rest here, my boy! You've done good work—a man's work—and I'm proud of you. Now rest. That's right. We'll have this all cleared up soon. Come, man!—I'm going to help you into this cabin until we start back, and you're going to lie down. Soldiers who have won their rest, must take it—Wardy!"

He slipped one strong arm under Warfield's armpits, and helped him to walk, and the boy for once was too tired to make any further bluff, simply stumbled along, mighty grateful for

this sure, steady support, the close cropped, fluffy, tow-head resting, as if he had been a small boy again, on the broad, double gold-starred shoulder of his General—his father—the father of all true-hearted marines.

CHAPTER XIV

OUR HERO

*"It matters not how straight the gate,
How charged with punishment the scroll;
I am the master of my fate;
I am the captain of my soul."*

(—William Henley.)

Ah, lucky Eighteen! A couple of days' rest, with one hundred per cent more petting than is good for any boy, and out you come, as full of cheerful swagger, as brightly purposeful, as pleasantly self-reliant and cock-sure as if you and Death had not been looking one another in the face so short a time before!

So it was with Wardy, and the Friday just one week from his fight with Kildare found him, not in his olive drabs, but resplendent in his "blue"—dark blue tunic faced in red, and trousers of a much lighter blue—his dress cap fitted snugly on his round, tow-head, and his mind full of a gentle regret that marine "Non. Coms." did not make a habit of sporting swagger sticks, like their English brothers.

The cause of all this gorgeousness was that,

as was duly announced on Wardy's "pinky-card" from the Chaplain's office, to-night was to be the second of the July weekly dances for the enlisted men, and Wardy had a "date"—Oh, dizzy triumph!—with Miss Mary Sawyer, of Leadenwallston, and, although it was only four o'clock, that young lady was due to arrive at Camp Ross at five, under convoy of her mamma—rather a terrible, old lady—and must be escorted to the Hostess House where that most patient among women, the Lady of the House, was wont to receive any number of mothers, wives, sisters, and sweethearts of the enlisted men, and make them welcome in her own, charming way.

Wardy had grossly imposed upon friendship, for he had pressed his impudent-faced, young buddy into service, to accompany him to meet the train from Leadenwallston, and to escort mamma, but Larry Bluff, who now looked upon the tow-headed Corporal as a sort of Lancelot and Galahad rolled up into one, with a dash of Du Guesclin added by way of extra adoration, assented to this shabby proposal with perfect willingness.

"Say, Larry Bluff!" Wardy demanded, with much earnestness, trying mighty hard to examine his entire length in a shaving mirror, lent with

huge jocosity by the Hard Boiled Egg, "How do I look?"

"Just *great!*" from Larry, with such adoring vehemence that Warfield had the grace to blush.

"You look sort of fit your own self, Larry Bluff!" he remarked graciously, and Larry Bluff, impudent, prankish Larry Bluff, took this from his hero quite humbly.

"Wish you'd just behold Antinous and the Apollo Belvedere comparing notes there, in the Forty-ninth's barracks, Chet!" remarked the stout Chaplain, as he stood close to an open window of that frame shack.

"Well, Brown's a pretty fine fellow, Chaplain!" Chet answered gravely. "He's a right to be proud of himself, when all of us are so proud of him."

"Of course we're proud of him!" the Chaplain snapped, and then, once more allowing a jovial grin to spread over his face, he wagged one plump finger at the young Lieutenant, and quoted:

"'Quoth she: 'The pride upon me grates,
Of Gwyndolin and Gladys Gates!'

"'I will,' she added, with a frown,
'Call Gwyndolin and Gladys down!'"

"Now watch me, Chet! And don't be a young ass,

and misunderstand me. Wardy has done a brave thing, a heroic thing, and I believe there is stuff for finer things yet locked up in that tough breast of his, but they must be got at, Chet; they must be got at!" and, to a Sergeant who was about to enter the Forty-ninth's abode, "Sergeant! Tell Corporal Brown I want to see him."

The Sergeant hurried inside, and delivered the officer's message, and of course Corporal Brown immediately appeared, followed by the all-worshipping Larry Bluff, and a general exhibition of saluting at once followed, most edifying to behold.

"Wardy," the Chaplain began, speaking very quietly, "Sergeant Bowker told me you expected some friends for the dance to-night, on the five o'clock from Leadenwallston, so, as I am going toward the station, I'll talk to you a bit. Have you heard that Hanson—'Yank' as you boys call him—is dying?"

"Yessir!" the one-worded contraction of the response a little sulky, a little nervous.

"Oh, indeed! I wasn't sure, Wardy. You see, they had to operate again this morning, and he simply seems to refuse to rally. They sent for me, and—and I went, Wardy—and I believe, just as the Surgeon says, that Yank will die to-night. He does not wish to get well. He's not

trying to get well. He—he told me so. Poor child!" with sudden vehemence, from the good, old fellow, blowing his nose energetically, "he looks for all the world like a big, mischievous, school-boy, only for his eyes—his eyes are heart-breaking, Wardy! Wistful, wretched, ashamed, self-damnatory. And yet he tried to save the Brigadier's boy—he offered his life for Bunny; offered it freely."

"Yessir!" again from the stout, little marine, "but—but if Yank had of behaved himself, and hadn't slipped off on French, for Leadenwallston, and allowed Kildare to have his uniform, none of it would have happened, sir."

The old officer laid one hand on the boy's arm, looking down into his sullen, young face searchingly.

"We've wired to Balentree for his grandmother," he said evenly, "but of course we have not told her that her boy is actually dying—only that he is very, very sick. She is an old, old woman, and must be spared any sudden shock so far as we can. The Surgeon thinks that Hanson will live several hours more, and so we have decided to have her wait for a while at the Hostess House, and make her as comfortable as we can and tell her things gradually, and that part, of course, will be my duty, and since even now

that boy has a tiny chance, we will not at once take her to see him, but wait a bit. Now, as that Charleston train gets in at four-thirty, and as you will have lots of time before your friends arrive from Leadenwallston, won't you—since you are a Corporal—meet the poor, old lady, and see her safely to the Hostess House?"

Warfield scowled.

"Aw, Chaplain, sir!" he growled. "Wouldn't it be nicer to get one of the old fellows, like Sergeant Bowker?"

"Hardly!" the Chaplain responded quietly. "This old lady will feel better to see other boys near her, like her own boy. So how about it, Wardy? It's not an order, you understand."

"Aw, *pie!*" the youngster flung out angrily, "Sure I'll meet her, sir, but—but—why in time should *I*, out of all the fellows in barracks, be asked to meet Yank Hanson's grandmother, when Yank has been rotten to me ever since I've been in the Corps?"

"Thank you, Wardy!" was all the Chaplain said, and, with a queer, little smile, he left the boy and struck up hill to the hotel.

"Now don't you talk to me, Larry Bluff!" blazed out the stout, little marine. "I'll hit somebody pretty soon, you just see if I don't!"

"Never heard of such a stunt!" Larry cried

sympathetically. "Say, Wardy! I'll meet that old lady for you."

"*Naw!*" savagely, from young Warfield. "Didn't the Chaplain say he wanted a Non. Com. to do it? Sure he did, doggone it! Now you stick right spang at the depot, so if I ain't back from the Hostess House in time, you'll be able to explain things to Miss Mary. Get me?"

"Sure! I'll be there, Wardy!"

"Good!" and the two friends walked for the station, Wardy scowling mightily, and yet showing an odd, nervous blush on each tanned cheek.

An hour later—five-thirty—and pretty Mary Sawyer tripped into the Hostess House, under the impudent, but devoted guidance of Larry Bluff, while, to the untold delight of all beholders, the bony Mrs. Sawyer followed, openly agitated by the gallantries of—the Hard Boiled Egg, who was having the time of his life, the old sinner, by telling the good dame of how a "flock av Seraphim saved me life, Madam, wance on a time in Haiti!"

As they entered the lobby of the Hostess House, Mary just a little pettish at the tardiness of her Corporal, two people emerged from the big, cheerful loafing-room, and moved very slowly across the lobby toward the tea-room. One was a stocky, well muscled, young marine,

with a tow-head, who, though rather short himself, still had to bend his height a little as he gave his chevroned, blue arm to a tiny, old lady, whose trembling, little hand, in an old-fashioned, black silk mitt, rested on the tough arm very happily, her bright, little, old eyes smiling up at the sun-browned face of her escort, on whose mouth there flickered a shy, but very tender, grin.

"We'll have some eats, you know," said Wardy—it was he, of course—" 'cause they've got mighty nice eats here, Mrs. Hanson. Tea, an' cocoa, an' coffee, an' bread an' butter, an' lettuce sandwiches, an' chicken salad sandwiches, an' tongue sandwiches, an' doughnuts, an' lemon pie, an' apple pie, an' ice cream—three kinds, honest they have—an' little cakes. An' we can buy one of those pasteboard things full of ice cream and take it over to Yank later on, can't we? 'Most everybody liked Yank. I remember, Mrs. Hanson, 'bout two months ago, I was talkin' to my buddy, Larry Bluff, an' I said that I never saw a fellow who could get so many friends. Why, no matter how tired, or blue, or grouchy, 'most of the marines were, Yank could get a laugh out of 'em. He was always jokin' and teasin' some boy—h-honest he was! Lots of the men were crazy about Yank."

The tiny, old lady laughed happily; it was so

good to know from this handsome, brown-skinned boy that her grandson was just as popular as he should be, and so these two, the husky, young Non. Com. and Yank's grandmother, walked into the dining-room, the boy taking off his cap and smiling a little absently at pretty Mary Sawyer as he passed.

"Glory be!" from Sergeant Bowker, turning from the enraptured Mrs. Sawyer to Larry Bluff. "There goes our young hero, b'gorry!"

"Aw, Sergeant!" Larry Bluff flung back, very much in dead earnest. "You've been seeing this hero of ours for the last week, sir. And he's a wonder, all right!"

"I have *not*, thin!" most emphatically, from the Hard Boiled Egg. "I've niver seen him before, I tell ye. Phwat I've been seein' for th' last wake, Larry, has been th' natural, continted swagger av iny brave bhoy, thinkin' most will av himself for phwat he has been a'doin', *but* Larry, Whardy's av th' rale hero stuff now, wid that light av a right feelin' bhoy a'shinin' in th' young eyes av 'im—an' he's after bein' a *rale* hero this night!"

CHAPTER XV

THE BATTLE

“Meleager:

*“Unto each man his fate,
Unto each as he saith
In whose finger the weight
Of the world is as breath;
Yet I would that in clamor of battle, mine hands
had laid hold upon death.”*

(—Algernon Charles Swinburne.)

Yank Hanson was dying. The big, gay heart, full of its mischief, full of its thoughtless, skylarking pranks, fluttered with a sort of weak impatience to shake off the shame that was pressing, beating, at the young life within the sturdy body, and only once since his brain had cleared from the ether had the familiar, impish smile shown itself, and that was when four or five of his brother marines, dressed spick and span for their dance, frolicked by the hospital, singing:

“‘If the Army and the Navy,
Ever look on Heaven’s scenes;
They will find the streets are guarded by
The UNITED STATES MARINES!’”

"Chaplain, sir!" the sick boy asked, turning his big body slightly toward the old officer who sat close to the bed. "D'you reckon they'll ever put me on—on post up there—so—so those Army an' Navy fellows can see me? D'you think He—He will let a marine in on guard mount who—who's taken French, sir?"

"Why, my dear boy," the Chaplain answered gently, "you are going to serve under a Commandant who is always good to His boys—a Commandant we all must face some day, and face with rejoicing, be we boys or men. And remember what the Apostle whom He most loved said: 'Greater love hath no man than this; that a man lay down his life for his friend.' And you did that—just that. You gave your life willingly, knowingly, for your Brigadier's boy."

"You—you think he—the Brigadier—knows that, sir? When a feller's been as tough as I have—they—they don't generally remember much of the little good he tries to do—do they, sir? Gee! I—I sure do want to see him! Please, Chaplain!"

The Chaplain rose to his feet, and motioned one of the "Jackies" on duty in the hospital to him, and the "Jacky," saluting, hurried out, first to the Navy Surgeon, then to the telephone.

The Brigadier was sitting at a late dinner,

Bunny, cheerfully employed with his third piece of cherry pie, exactly opposite him, and Tom sitting between them, attending most efficiently to his second piece.

"Ain't you goin' to give me back that Chinese Musette, daddy?" the Brigadier's boy demanded wistfully. "Say! It's not busted so awful bad, honest it's not! Fact is, daddy, I think she hollers better'n she used to before Kildare stepped on her, 'cause Mack yells just great now-a-days when I blow on it, same as he does when I *yeow-yeow* at him. And here you come and take it away from me!"

"You're enough to make Charon himself laugh, Bunny!" the Brigadier smiled. "As to that Chinese Musette, I'll get you another one, son, but that one I'll keep for myself. I think—I think it—it helped to save your life, Bunny. If Kildare had remembered to throw it back out of the canoe, along with your clothes, I—I don't know how his tussle with Brown might have ended. Now don't look so cross, Bunny! You're getting to be a regular bully, you young scamp! Here! I'll buy you half a dozen Chinese Musettes if you want 'em. Euphemia!" to the colored maid. "Give each of these boys another piece of cherry pie! What's that? 'Phone, eh? Never mind, Bunny! Hold your horses, son! I'll answer it."

Two minutes later, his lean face very grave, he had put on his cap, had entered his machine, and was heading across to the river and the hospital.

Arrived there, the Brigadier at once swung into the office of the Navy Surgeon.

"Is Hanson really dying, Doctor?" he asked quietly.

"Undoubtedly, General! If he lives an hour or two more I'll be surprised. The Chaplain has gone to the Hostess House to get his grandmother," and then, stretching out his hands helplessly, "What can we do, General, when a boy simply won't try to live? The operation was, in itself, fairly successful."

"Has he eaten anything, Doctor?"

"Certainly not, except a little crushed ice. A teaspoonful or so of plain ice cream wouldn't hurt him, if he'd take it, but he won't, and simply turns his head away and asks the nurse why can't he let a fellow die in peace?"

"Well!" from the Brigadier, "I'm going up to see him," and up he went, the Surgeon at his heels.

Straight to Yank's bed he marched, springy, and efficient, and very much the Post Commandant at this moment, and the boy, his big eyes lighting up with a tired, little smile, tried to

salute, and the Brigadier returned the salute most snappily.

"Now, see here, see here, Hanson!" he chided, his voice familiar to this big, sick boy as a reminder of his cool, abrupt manner during a review. "Don't be an ass! Marines don't die in bed, man. Marines die on the battlefield, where they belong. And I've always bragged a good bit that my marines know how to put up a real scrap, too. Well, you've got to fight, and fight hard. You've got to fight for life, Hanson. That's not a request, boy; that's my order. Are you going to obey it?"

The sick marine's brown eyes had lost their tired, hopeless look, and had lighted up, while the young face on the pillow instinctively assumed the alert, respectful expression of one receiving orders from his superior.

"Oh, *yes*, sir!"

"Ah, here are some visitors for you, Hanson!" the Brigadier smiled at last. "And it looks to me as if they had something good to eat. See? Here's your grandmother come all the way from Balentree to see you, and here's Corporal Brown, of your own Company, with her, plus some ice cream. The Doctor says you can have two teaspoonfuls every two hours. Where's that nurse? Johnson! Bring me a teaspoon. That's it! Now give this boy a swallow of ice cream."

"Aw, I'd just as lief feed it to him, sir!" spoke up Corporal Brown, and then added hastily: "I—I got the box right here in my hand, an' all, so I might as well, sir. I'd just as lief as not," and, stooping over his one-time enemy, Wardy fed him his two spoonfuls of ice cream, smiling down at him a shy, awkward friendliness, while the Brigadier, remembering the evidence handed down at the investigation of the trouble on the gymnasium steps, nodded his head in open satisfaction, and at last it had to bubble over.

"Pull together, all these boys of mine, even when they're in the sick bay, eh, Doctor?" he said, turning to the Surgeon.

"Apparently they do," the Navy man assented, "but blamed if I ever expected to see those two working in double harness, General."

The stout, little marine, who had now straightened himself from his stooping posture over Yank's cot, met the doctor's eye squarely.

"Well?" that officer inquired, with a smile. "You were going to say, Corporal?"

"Nothin', sir!" a little abashed was Wardy, "That is—that is—only—only the fellows in our Corps've got no business fussin' among 'emselves, 'cause it's the biggest pull-together Corps in the world—that's why we always get there! And Yank'll eat ice cream for me every two hours

to-night 'till he goes to sleep—if you'll let me stay—and—and you bet he'll obey *your* orders, General!" to the smiling Brigadier.

"Think so, Corporal?"

"Yes *sir!*" most emphatically, though with his very friendliest grin, too. "He just wouldn't think of disobeyin' *you*, sir. That sort of stuff's not in him, you know. He's a *marine*, sir!"

CHAPTER XVI

“REJOICE! WE CONQUER!”

“So is Pheidippides happy forever—the noble strong man.

Who could race like a God, bear the face of a God, whom a God loved so well.”

(—Robert Browning.)

It was late August. Yank Hanson was about ready to leave the hospital, and this particularly hot afternoon three marines, all on liberty for the day, were talking of him, and of many other things, idly enough, determined not to return to the post until it was time for the evening's band concert, sing-song, the moving pictures.

They had been fishing all day, since very early morning, and now were loafing most blissfully, after a swim in the Big Bear—Wardy, brown as to body and white as to legs, lying flat on his back, his two hands cupped under his close cropped, fluffy, tow-head, one leg bent at the knee so that its foot could splash, now and then, in the cool water below the low bank; Larry Bluff lying on his stomach, his heels moving lazily in the air, and the third of this party, Sergeant Bowker,

cleaning fish with the utmost relish, and puffing vigorously at a short clay pipe.

“Gee, but poor, old Yank had a close call, didn’t he?” Wardy remarked, giving his swinging foot a splash in the river that sent a generous spurt of water over the Hard Boiled Egg, who chuckled, and shook a fist at him.

“Sure he did!” Larry Bluff assented, “but he’s all hunky-dory now-a-days. He’ll be back in Company soon. ’Course his rating hasn’t been helped any too much by his taking French.”

“’Course not!” from Corporal Brown, “but I think Lieutenant Chet’ll be pretty easy on that boy, all the same. I know the Brigadier will be. Hope they both will, anyhow.”

“Gee, Wardy!” Larry laughed, looking at his tow-headed buddy from between sleepy, half-closed eyelids. “You’re sort of—of changed, somehow.”

“I should *hope* so!” most energetically, from the stout, little marine, so much in dead earnest that he rolled over on his side to face the other youngster. “If a man can stay in our Corps ’most a year and a half, like I have, and not change, there’s something funny about him, Larry Bluff. Most of us, like you and me, came in kids, and—and we’ll go out *marines*, and that’s pretty much the same as saying men, you bet!

What's the diff, Larry Bluff, whether fellows stick to the Corps, and work for commissions one of these days, like you and me, or pull out when their time expires, like Yank and Falworth will do, and like a lot more will do? The big thing is this—just this: they'll be trained men; trained in some technical trade or profession, without one cent of expense to 'emselfes, all ready to buckle down to a life's work, and with a chunk of real, sure 'nough manhood knocked into 'em from their life in the Corps that'll carry 'em through anything, you bet! Say! Am I right, Sergeant?"

"Right as a trivet, Whardy!" the old fellow yelled back, waving a gleaming perch by way of emphasis. "But ye'll be for stickin' to th' Corps, as ye say. Ye're shure av that, me b'y?"

Wardy laughed.

"'Sure as a kildee, Sergeant, an' they're said to be a mighty sure bird!'" he quoted, with his widest grin. "Say! Remember the first time I ever heard you get that off, sir? Bet you don't, but I do, all right. It was on the old dining-car *Pom Pom*, on the Seaboard Air Line, last June, and me and Larry Bluff were having chow with Dr. Iron, of the Public Health Service, and you were teasin' us, pretendin' we had orders for Haiti."

“To be shure I remimber ut, Whardy!” the Hard Boiled Egg chuckled, “but th’ divil av a lot av wather’s flowed down this auld river since thin, me son! Ye weren’t after thinkin’ ye’d be a dashin’, young Corporal thin, Whardy, a’breakin’ th’ hearts av ivery pretty girrul that comes to the post dances, poor dears!”

“No, and I can’t see where I’m doing any of it, neither!” Wardy laughed, though he blushed, too. “I’m not much with girls, I guess! Oh, I like ’em—you bet I like ’em!—but—but, Gee! I don’t know what to talk about after a dance, like Larry Bluff does, or Wally Falworth. It’s all easy as pie while we’re dancing, of course, ’cause I just say: ‘Gee! Don’t that old band make a racket? It’s no use for a fellow to *try* to talk, is it?’ But, Gosh! When the dance is over, an’ I’ve clicked my heels together, and thanked her for such a jolly dance—I do that part right nice, honest I do!—why blamed if I know what to say. Girls aren’t interested in real things—like commissions, an’ promotions, an’ mechanical engineering, and fightin’ niggers, down in Haiti!”

“You did sort of lose out with Yank’s ‘Mary friend’, didn’t you, Wardy?” Larry Bluff giggled.

“Sure I did,” quite solemnly, from the stout, little marine, “ain’t that just what I’m telling

you, Larry Bluff? She said Yank told her she had such pretty blue eyes, and I said 'Gee, Miss Mary! *Are* they blue?'—and she's never liked me since. Honest, fellows, *I* didn't know what color eyes she had! But I'm awful glad she and Yank have made up; he's twice as much spunk since she sent him that box of home-made fudge. Say! That was right nice fudge! I ate 'most half the box."

"Ye poor fish!" from the Hard Boiled Egg, eying the youthful Corporal of the 49th with a good-natured sort of pity. "Did ye not think th' candy all th' swater for knowin' th' owner av th' fair hands that made ut?"

"No, I didn't!" quite gravely, from Warfield, his big eyes perfectly honest. "It had too many nuts in it—I remember I said so to Yank. *Now* what you two guys laughin' at?"

"I give ye up, Whardy!" the Old Sergeant chuckled. "Ye'll be a bether hand wid th' naigers av Haiti, I'm thinkin' thin wid th' girruls."

"Oh, Wardy'll handle the niggers all right!" Larry Bluff chimed in, very real affection lighting up his dark eyes as they rested on his husky buddy. "For myself, I'll keep on with my old saxophone, an' I'll be leader of the Fifth's band one of these days—and—and I'll be in *the* band, our Marine Band, before I get through, playin'

at the diplomatic receptions at the White House—and when I get to be the leader of it, like John Philip Sousa, or Santleman, won't I just hit my music desk a good crack, and swing that old band of ours into *Semper Fidelis* when they announce—say in 1945—‘The Major General Commandant of the United States Marine Corps, your Excellency!’ and my buddy trots into the blue room, or the red room, or whichever it is!”

“Sergeant!” from Warfield, his jolly, young voice just a little husky, somehow, though he was laughing, too. “They don't turn out many models like this buddy of mine, do they? You bet they don't! Not even in the Marine Corps. Say, Larry Bluff! Reckon we better put on our clothes, an' start back for barracks, or you'll be late for the band concert, and get another call-down from the Band Sergeant, and, anyhow, I want to be in time for it all—it's Saturday night, and that's always good fun—and Charlie Chaplin's on for the comic. My pinky card says so. Gimme my clothes, and I'll show you! Yank'll be over at the Gym. to-night, and he's going to hold on to my pet seat for me, and if he calls me Waffles, I won't give two hurrahs! We'll hold a place 'long side us for you, so when the band concert's over you can scuffle in with us, only leave that old saxophone up by the stage. It takes

up more room than three marines. Hand me those fishy-fish, Sergeant! Take an oar, Larry Bluff! We can row as well as the Gobs, and walk as well as the Dough-boys, eh, fellows? Ready? All right! 'Way all!" and the boat shot out into the river, the two rowers, in perfect unison, sending her skimming over the water, their boyish voices, pleasant and jolly, if a bit breathless from their hard work, joining in with the old Sergeant's as they left the willows behind them, and headed for a distant strip of beach, the strip behind the Red Cross hut:

" 'From the halls of Montezuma
To the shores of Tripoli,
We fight our country's battles,
On the land as on the sea.
First to fight for right and freedom,
And to keep our honor clean,
We are proud to claim the title
Of United States Marines.' "

And so we will leave them—your boys, my boys—rowing up the great river for their post, their home, happy in the sure companionship of the clean limbed, young fellows so soon gathering now for the jolly good times in the "Gym.", looking forward to the heaps of good fun, and the inspiration of purposeful, hard work that they know forms the road to the gratification of their

own deepest longings, sure of the wise guidance of their “Chaplain, sir!” whenever they need him, and of his contagious enthusiasm in all their sports and happy times of all sorts, confident in the alert clear-headedness of their so wisely understanding Brigadier, and serene, as few other boys, placed elsewhere can be serene, I think, in the sympathy, the control, the supreme patience, and the inspirational glorification of duty, of their General himself—valiant, fearless, young hearts; steady, honest, young eyes; supple, steel-like, young muscles; clean, purposeful, young lives; all bent on the making of the true manhood their General typifies—a United States Marine. And so, somewhat like *Tiny Tim*, let’s say together, boys: “God bless them all; every one!”

THE END.

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